

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

ATTACHMENT 1

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND CULTURE			
REGISTER OF FEES AND CHARGES			
Div	Fee Description	Basis of Fee: Legislation, Regulation, Gazettal, Admin	Fees and Charges (Excluding GST)
			Revenue Unit Value: 1 unit = \$1.18
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>ENTRY TO GUIDED TOUR OF ALICE SPRINGS TELEGRAPH STATION HISTORICAL RESERVE (Concession Agreement)</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Per Adult	Admin	13.64
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Per Child	Admin	NA
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Per Child (U/12)	Admin	5
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Per Child (U/16)	Admin	8.45
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Student	Admin	8.45
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Senior / Concession Card Holder	Admin	11.36
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Group Booking (per person)	Admin	
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Family	Admin	31.82

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>HUNTING PERMITS</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Pig Hunting Permit - 1 year permit	Gazettal	10
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Pig Hunting Permit - 5 year permit	Gazettal	40
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Waterfowl Hunting Permit - 1 year permit	Gazettal	20
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Waterfowl Hunting Permit - 5 year permit	Gazettal	80
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Permit to take protected wildlife for commercial purposes	Legislation	NIL - subject to royalties
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Permit to use park or reserve for purpose of taking animals specified in permit	Legislation	15 units
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Annual fees to sell and apply for hire any goods or services or to conduct a tour/safari or excursion (Application fee to conduct business in a National Park)	Admin	Subject to negotiation of Agreement
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Replacement fee for hunting permit card	Admin	20
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Crocodile Team Filming Fees - half day	Admin	1500
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Crocodile Team Filming Fees - full day	Admin	3000
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>CROCODILE PRODUCT TAGS</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Product tag	Legislation	0.4
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	CITIES tag	Legislation	1.5
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>FILMING AND PHOTOGRAPHIC CHARGES - COMMERCIAL AGENCIES ONLY</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Application fee for Motion/Video Filming in parks and Still Photography	Regulations	55



Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Application fee for Still Photography in parks	Regulations	55
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>Botanic Gardens</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Site Fee wedding ceremony, meetings, functions - half day - up to 6 hours	Admin	0
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Site Fee Corporate functions and receptions for 1-2 days	Admin	0
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Site Fee Major events	Admin	0
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>EVENT FEES - Botanic Gardens Darwin Botanic Gardens</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Private Event - wedding ceremony, meetings, functions up to 6 hour period	Admin	175
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Private Event - wedding ceremony, meetings, functions up to 12 hour period	Admin	350
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Private Event - wedding ceremony, meetings, functions up to 18 hour period	Admin	525
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Private Event - wedding ceremony, meetings, functions up to 24 hour period	Admin	700
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Commercial/Corporate Event Up to 250 Attendees per 12 hour period	Admin	500
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Commercial/Corporate Event 250- 500 Attendees per 12 hour period	Admin	100
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Commercial/Corporate Event 500+ Attendees per 12 hour period	Admin	2500
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Community Event - Major events	Admin	On negotiation - no set fee
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Horticulturist (if required) at any given event per staff member per half day	Admin	220
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>EVENTS FEES - Parks and Reserves (excluding TWP, ASDP and GBDBG)</b>		

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Commercial / corporate event - up to 20 attendees	Admin	On negotiation - no set fee
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Commercial / corporate event - 21 to 99 attendees	Admin	On negotiation - no set fee
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Commercial / corporate event - 100 to 499 attendees	Admin	On negotiation - no set fee
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Commercial / corporate event - 500 + attendees	Admin	On negotiation - no set fee
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY - Parks and Reserves (excluding TWP, ASDP and GBDBG)</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Application fee for permit to operate business or commercial activities in Park or Reserve	Admin	300
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>CAMPING FEES</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Camping Fees - Gurig National Park - No charge for u/16's	Legislation	0
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Transit fee Gurig National Park	Legislation	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Vehicle Access - vehicle/week (covers up to 5 adults)	Legislation	232.1
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Air/Sea Access per adult per night if camping	Legislation	15
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Additional adults (+5) / person	Legislation	9.9
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Camping Fees - Category A - Adult	Legislation	6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Camping Fees - Category A - Child	Legislation	3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Camping Fees - Category A - Family	Legislation	14

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Camping Fees - Category B - Adult	Legislation	3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Camping Fees - Category B - Child	Legislation	1.5
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Camping Fees - Category B - Family	Legislation	7
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Camping Fees - Category C - Adult	Legislation	3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Camping Fees - Category C - Child	Legislation	1.5
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Camping Fees - Category C - Family	Legislation	7
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Camping Fees - Category D	Admin	As per Category A - this can be higher if approved by Commission for campground
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Bush Camping - Permit Required - Adult	Legislation	3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Bush Camping - Permit Required - Child	Legislation	1.5
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Bush Camping - Permit Required - Family	Legislation	7
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Walking Track Camping Fees Jaybula - adult (max 15pp)	Admin	3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Walking Track Camping Fees Jaybula - child	Admin	1.5
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Walking Track Camping Fees - Larapinta	Admin	0
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Walking Track Camping Fees - Tabletop	Admin	3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	School Campground Areas - LNP - Adult	Legislation	3

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	School Campgroud Areas - LNP - Child	Legislation	1.5
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	School Campgroud Areas - Ormiston	Legislation	Concessinaire
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	School Campgroud Areas - Simpsons Gap Adult (16 years old+)	Legislation	3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	School Campgroud Areas - Simpsons Gap (5-16 years old+)	Legislation	1.5
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	School Campgroud Areas - Simpsons Gap (<5 years old)	Legislation	N/A
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>GUIDES - PARK MANAGEMENT</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Tour Operator Permits	Admin	4 or less visits \$100 5 or more visits \$500 3-year permit \$1500 5-year permit \$2500
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Provision of Specialist Guide	Legislation	400 per day or 50 per hour
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Guided Tours < 3 hours - Adults	Legislation	2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Guided Tours < 3 hours - Children	Legislation	1
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Guided Bushwalking Tours	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Guided Mountain Bike Tours	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Guided Spotlighting Tours	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Mobile Kiosk Sales	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Guided Cave Tours	Admin	Annual fee or %

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Restricted Area Guided Walking Tours	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Restricted Area Guided Vehicle Tours	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Ballooning Tours	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Parachute Landings	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Non-motorised Canoe Hire	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Guided Boat Tours	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Dinghy Hire	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Guided Abseiling / Rock Climbing	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Guided Horse / Camel Rides	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Exclusive Use Campsites	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Management of Wangi Centre (food and beverage / Art Shop)	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Operation of Entry Station and Gift Shop	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Operation of Historic Precinct	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Guided Cultural Tours	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Scenic Helicopter Flights	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Helifishing Tours	Admin	Annual fee or %

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Mobile Shaved Ice Van	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Segway Tours	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Operation of Eva's Café	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Tented (Safari) Camp	Admin	Annual fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Camp Ground Management (Category D Camp areas managed commercially)	Admin	Annual Fee or %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>Nitmiluk National Park Concession Agreements</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Catered Cruises Launch Food Beverage	Legislation	%
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Launch Tours	Legislation	%
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Ferry Service	Legislation	%
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Canoe Hire	Legislation	%
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Power Boats	Legislation	%
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Caravan Park, Campground, Kiosk	Legislation	%
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Helicopter Tours	Legislation	%
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Guided Walking Tours	Legislation	%
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Operation of Cicada Lodge	Admin	%
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Potable water - caravan park, house 1, house 2, house 3, House 4, House 5, workshop	Admin	\$0.68 per unit consumed

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Potable water - Nitmiluk Centre	Admin	\$0.452 per unit consumed
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Non-potable water - caravan park	Admin	\$0.21 per unit consumed
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>Garig Gunak Barlu National Park Agreements</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Operation of Seven Spirit Bay (includes payment for Annual Rent, Airstrip Usage, Park Entry, Turnover Rent)	Admin	Fees and %
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Marine Park	Admin	Fees
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Tented Camp, Guided Vehicle, Fishing and Victoria Settlement Tours	Admin	Annual Fee plus fees
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>Mary River National Park Agreements</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Lease Area	Admin	Fees
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Commercial Activities (Home Billabong Cruise, Leichardt Point Sundowners, Walking Tours, Fishing Tours)	Admin	%
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Airboat Tours	Admin	%
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Mary River Rockhole Tour	Admin	%
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	- Guided Boat Tours	Admin	%
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>WILDLIFE ROYALTIES</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>Animals</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Anseranas semipalmata / egg	Gazettal	0.45
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Crocodylus johnstoni / egg	Gazettal	1.15

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Crocodylus johnstoni / hatchling	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Crocodylus johnstoni / adult 1.5m	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Crocodylus johnstoni / adult > 1.5m	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Crocodylus porosus / egg	Gazettal	1.4
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Crocodylus porosus / hatchling	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Crocodylus porosus / adult < 2m	Gazettal	28
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Crocodylus porosus / adult > 2m	Gazettal	46
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>Plant Seeds</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Abrus precatorius / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia acradenia / kg	Gazettal	13
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia argyraea / kg	Gazettal	8
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia aulacocarpa / kg	Gazettal	14
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia auriculiformis / kg	Gazettal	28
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia colei / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia cowleana / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia dictyophleba / kg	Gazettal	8.6



Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia difficilis / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia dimidiata / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia dunnii / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia gonocarpa / kg	Gazettal	17
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia gonoclada / kg	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia hammondii / kg	Gazettal	7.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia hemignosta / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia holosericea / kg	Gazettal	6.9
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia kempeana / kg	Gazettal	6.9
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia latescens / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia lysiphloia / kg	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia melleodora / kg	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia monticola / kg	Gazettal	9.2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia mountfordiae / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia multisiliqua / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia nuperrima / kg	Gazettal	43

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia oncinocarpa / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia platycarpa / kg	Gazettal	6.9
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia plectocarpa / kg	Gazettal	9.2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia retivenea / kg	Gazettal	9.2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia shirleyi / kg	Gazettal	17
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia simsii / kg	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia torulosa / kg	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia tropica / kg	Gazettal	23
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia tumida / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia umbellata / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia victoriae / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia wickhamii / kg	Gazettal	17
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Adenanthera pavonia / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Albizia lebbeck / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Alphitonia excelsa / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Asteromyrtus symphyocarpa / kg	Gazettal	14

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Astrebla sp. / kg	Gazettal	1.15
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Atalaya hemiglauca / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Atriplex nummularia / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Banksia dentata / 100 seeds	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Bombax ceiba / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Brachychiton diversifolius / kg	Gazettal	12
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Brachychiton megaphyllus / kg	Gazettal	17
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Brachychiton paradoxus / kg	Gazettal	17
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Buchanania obovata / kg	Gazettal	17
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Callitris intratropica / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Canarium australianum / 100 seeds	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Carpentaria acuminata / 100 seeds	Gazettal	1.4
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Cassia artemisioides / kg	Gazettal	6.9
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Cassia desolata / kg	Gazettal	6.9
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Cassia glutinosa / kg	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Cassia notabilis / kg	Gazettal	5.75

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Cassia oligophylla</i> / kg	Gazettal	6.9
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Cassia sturtii</i> / kg	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i> / kg	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Clianthus formosus</i> / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Cochlospermum fraseri</i> / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Cycas angulata</i> R.Br. / 100 seeds	Gazettal	2.3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Cycas armstrongii</i> Miq. / 100 seeds	Gazettal	1.15
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Cycas brunnea</i> / 100 seeds	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Cycas calcicola</i> Maconochie / 100 seeds	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Cycas canalis</i> subsp. <i>canalis</i> / 100 seeds	Gazettal	2.3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Cycas canalis</i> subsp. <i>carinata</i> / 100 seeds	Gazettal	2.3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Cycas conferta</i> / 100 seeds	Gazettal	2.3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Cycas maconochieana</i> / 100 seeds	Gazettal	2.3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Cycas pruinosa</i> Maconochie / 100 seeds	Gazettal	2.3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Dodonaea platyptera</i> / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Enchylaena tomentosa</i> / kg	Gazettal	11

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Erythrophleum chlorostachys</i> / kg	Gazettal	9.2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus alba</i> / kg	Gazettal	14
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus apodophylla</i> / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus argillacea</i> / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus aspera</i> / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus bigalerita</i> / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus bleeseri</i> / kg	Gazettal	17
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus brevifolia</i> / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus camaldulensis</i> / kg	Gazettal	14
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus chlorophylla</i> / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus clavigera</i> / kg	Gazettal	14
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus confertiflora</i> / kg	Gazettal	14
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus dichromophloia</i> / kg	Gazettal	14
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus ferruginea</i> / kg	Gazettal	14
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus foelscheana</i> / kg	Gazettal	15
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<i>Eucalyptus grandifolia</i> / kg	Gazettal	14

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus herbertiana / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus latifolia / kg	Gazettal	15
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus leucophloia / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus microtheca / kg	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus miniata / kg	Gazettal	17
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus nesophila / kg	Gazettal	13
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus normantonensis / kg	Gazettal	14
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus pachyphylla / kg	Gazettal	10.35
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus papuana / kg	Gazettal	14
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus patellaris / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus phoenicea / kg	Gazettal	17
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus polycarpa / kg	Gazettal	23
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus pruinosa / kg	Gazettal	17
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus ptychocarpa / kg	Gazettal	23
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus setosa (red) / kg	Gazettal	37
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus tectifera / kg	Gazettal	14

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus terminalis / kg	Gazettal	14
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus tetrodonta / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus tintinnans / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Euodia elleryana / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Gossypium sturtianum / kg	Gazettal	23
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Grevillea decurrens / kg	Gazettal	34
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Grevillea dryandri / kg	Gazettal	43
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Grevillea formosa / kg	Gazettal	43
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Grevillea goodii / kg	Gazettal	34
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Grevillea mimosoides / kg	Gazettal	34
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Grevillea parallela / kg	Gazettal	34
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Grevillea pteridifolia / kg	Gazettal	34
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Grevillea refracta / kg	Gazettal	43
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Grevillea striata / kg	Gazettal	34
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Grevillea wickhamii / kg	Gazettal	43
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Gyrocarpus americanus / kg	Gazettal	5.75

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Hakea arborescens / kg	Gazettal	34
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Ipomea brasiliensis / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Leptospermum parviflorum / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Livistona benthamii / 100 seeds	Gazettal	2.85
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Livistona humilis / 100 seeds	Gazettal	1.7
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Livistona inermis / 100 seeds	Gazettal	3.45
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Livistona rigida / 100 seeds	Gazettal	2.85
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Macrozamia macdonnellii / 100 seeds	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Melaleuca argentea / kg	Gazettal	14
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Melaleuca bracteata / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Melaleuca dealbata / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Melaleuca leucadendra / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Melaleuca minutifolia / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Melaleuca nervosa / kg	Gazettal	17
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Melaleuca viridiflora / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Owenia vernicosa / 100 seeds	Gazettal	8.6



Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Pandanus spiralis / 100 seeds	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Petalostigma pubescens / kg	Gazettal	14
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Pongamia pinnata / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Ptilotus exaltatus / kg	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Sesbania cannabina / kg	Gazettal	4.3
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Syzygium armstrongii / 100 seeds	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Syzygium eucalyptoides / 100 seeds	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Syzygium minutiflorum / 100 seeds	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Syzygium suborbiculare / 100 seeds	Gazettal	2.85
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Terminalia arostrata / kg	Gazettal	4.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Terminalia canescens / kg	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Terminalia carpentariae / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Terminalia ferdinandiana / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Terminalia platyphylla / kg	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Terminalia platyptera / kg	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Terminalia seriocarpa / kg	Gazettal	5.75

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Terminalia volucris / kg	Gazettal	8.6
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Triodia wiseana / kg	Gazettal	3.45
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Xanthostemon paradoxus / kg	Gazettal	28
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>Whole Plants</b>		0
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia auriculiformis / tree	Gazettal	9.2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Bambusa arnhemica / stem	Gazettal	0.55
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Erythroleum chlorostachys / tree	Gazettal	11
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus bigalerita / tree	Gazettal	9.2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus confertiflora / tree	Gazettal	9.2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus ferruginea / tree	Gazettal	9.2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus grandiflora / tree	Gazettal	9.2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus miniata / tree	Gazettal	9.2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus papuana / tree	Gazettal	9.2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus polycarpa / tree	Gazettal	9.2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus tetradonta / tree	Gazettal	9.2
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Melaleuca leucadendra / tree	Gazettal	9.2

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>Didgeridoos</b>		0
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	All species / stick	Gazettal	1.15
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>Leaves</b>		0
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Cycas armstrongii Miq. / 100	Gazettal	3.45
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Cycas maconochieana / 100	Gazettal	3.45
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>Fruits</b>		0
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Terminalia ferdinandiana / kg	Gazettal	1.15
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>Firewood</b>		0
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia aneura (mulga) / tonne	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia estrophiolata (ironwood) / tonne	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Eucalyptus camaldulensis (redgum) / tonne	Gazettal	5.75
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>Boomerangs</b>		0
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Acacia aneura (mulga) / stick	Gazettal	1.15
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	<b>SALEABLE ITEMS</b>		
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Notice of sale receipt books for vendors selling wildlife	Admin	20
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Larapinta Trail Map	Admin	9.09

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Larapinta Trail Map Pack	Admin	34.55
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Litchfield NP Map	Admin	4.55
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Animal/Plant Books	Admin	4.95
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Snake Poster	Admin	6.36
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Frogs of the NT 1986	Admin	5
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Historical Photos of NT Telegraph Stations	Admin	9.045454545
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Mangrove Plant Identikit	Admin	9.045454545
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Vascular Plants of Ashmore & Cartier Islands 1997	Admin	10
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Explore Australia's Northern Territory by Frank Alcorta	Admin	10
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	No.14 Mudburra Ethnobotany, Aboriginal Plant Use from Kulumindini (Elliot)	Admin	12
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	No. 18 Gurindji Ethnobotany, Aboriginal Plant Use, Daguragu, Northern Australia 1994	Admin	12
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	No.15 Mangarrayi Ethnobotany, Aboriginal Plant use from the Eisey Area Northern Australia	Admin	13.63636364
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	No. 17 Key to Grasses of the NT	Admin	13.63636364
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	No.16 Ngaryniman Ethnobotany and Aboriginal Plant Use from Kulumindini (Elliot) 1992	Admin	13.63636364
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	No. 9 Arid Zone Eucalypts of the NT	Admin	14.95454545
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	No.19 Sudanese Ethnobotany, Knowledge from Ciamis and Tasikmalaya West Java Indonesia	Admin	18

Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Warray Plants and Animals No. 33	Admin	18.18181818
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Mangroves of the NT	Admin	18.18181818
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Lost from our Landscape	Admin	22.68181818
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	No.30 Wagiman Plants & Animals 2006	Admin	24.54545455
Parks, Wildlife & Heritage	Flora of the Darwin Region (Volume2)	Admin	27.95454545
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	<b>Araluen Cultural Precinct (ACP)</b>		
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Equipment Hire - TV & DVD - per day	Admin	\$50.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Equipment Hire - TV & DVD - per 3 days - 1 week	Admin	\$150.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Equipment Hire - TV & DVD - per month	Admin	\$450.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Equipment Hire - Data Projector - per day	Admin	\$100.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Equipment Hire - Data Projector - per 3 days - 1 week	Admin	\$300.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Equipment Hire - Data Projector - per month	Admin	\$900.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire Charge - Witchetty's - Commercial - full day	Admin	\$422.73
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire Charge - Witchetty's - Community - full day	Admin	\$313.64
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire Charge - Witchetty's - Commercial - week	Admin	\$954.55
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire Charge - Witchetty's - Community - week	Admin	\$636.36

Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Extra cleaning/resetting if required - Witchetty's as a function space - per hour or part thereof	Admin	\$50.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Extra cleaning/resetting if required - Witchetty's as a gallery - per hour or part thereof	Admin	\$51.82
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire charge - Araluen Arts centre foyer for functions - per hour Community	Admin	\$0.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire charge - Araluen Arts centre foyer for functions - per hour - Commercial	Admin	\$0.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire charge - Araluen Arts centre foyer for functions - per function in combination with Witchetty's Hire - Community	Admin	\$181.82
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire charge - Araluen Arts centre foyer for functions - per function in combination with Witchetty's Hire - Commercial	Admin	\$272.73
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire charge - Araluen Arts centre foyer for functions - per function half day - Community	Admin	\$181.82
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire charge - Araluen Arts centre foyer for functions - per function half day - Commercial	Admin	\$272.73
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire charge - Araluen Arts centre foyer for functions - per function full day - Community	Admin	\$313.64
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire charge - Araluen Arts centre foyer for functions - per function full day - Commercial	Admin	\$422.73
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Circus Lawns - self contained -Community	Admin	\$227.27
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Circus Lawns - with Theatre / toilets - Community	Admin	\$800.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Circus Lawns - standing charge per day/part day - Community	Admin	\$200.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Circus Lawns - self contained - Commercial	Admin	\$318.18
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Circus Lawns - with Theatre / toilets - Commercial	Admin	\$1,000.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Circus Lawns - standing charge per day/part day - Commercial	Admin	\$200.00

Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Folk Cottage accomodation per day including telephone	Admin	\$100.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Folk Cottage accomodation Per week including telephone	Admin	\$500.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Folk Cottage accomodation Per month including telephone	Admin	\$1,636.36
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Theatre Standing Charge - per day - Community	Admin	\$454.55
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Theatre Standing Charge - per day - Commerical	Admin	\$454.55
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire Charge - Araluen Theatre - Commercial - full day	Admin	\$1,045.45
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire Charge - Araluen Theatre - Community - full day	Admin	\$818.18
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire Charge - Araluen Theatre - bleacher seating - Commercail	Admin	\$800.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Hire Charge - Araluen Theatre - bleacher seating - Community	Admin	\$600.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Commercial Rehearsal: Stage Only (with work lights only) - Full Day	Admin	\$545.45
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Commercial Rehearsal: Stage Only (with work lights only) - 5 hour session (during opening hours)	Admin	\$313.64
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Commercial Film Screenings - 4 hour session	Admin	\$450.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Community Rehearsal: Stage Only (with work lights only) - Full Day	Admin	\$418.18
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Community Rehearsal: Stage Only (with work lights only) - 5 hour session (during opening hours)	Admin	\$209.09
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Community Film Screenings - 4 hour session	Admin	\$350.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Community Bump In Days - Full day inclusive of theatre standing charges	Admin	\$418.19

Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Commerical Bump In Days - Full day inclusive of theatre standing charges	Admin	\$618.19
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Head Technician - per normal hour -Commercial	Admin	\$52.73
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Head Technician - per normal hour -Community	Admin	\$52.73
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Head Technician - per overtime hour Sunday's & Public Holiday's -Commercial	Admin	\$102.73
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Head Technician - per overtime hour Sunday's & Public Holiday's -Community	Admin	\$102.73
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Additional Technicians - per normal hour -Commercial	Admin	\$42.73
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Additional Technicians - per normal hour -Community	Admin	\$42.73
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Additional Technicians - per overtime hour Sunday's & Public Holidays-Commercial	Admin	\$81.82
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Additional Technicians - per overtime hour Sunday's & Public Holidays-Community	Admin	\$81.82
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Door Person - Backstage - per 4 hs session - Mon- Fri - Commercial	Admin	\$120.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Door Person - Backstage - per 4 hs session - Mon- Fri - Community	Admin	\$120.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Door Person - Backstage - per 4 hs session - Sat - Commercial	Admin	\$145.45
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Door Person - Backstage - per 4 hs session - Sat - Community	Admin	\$145.45
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Door Person - Backstage - per 4 hs session - Sun - Commercial	Admin	\$207.27
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Door Person - Backstage - per 4 hs session - Sun - Community	Admin	\$207.27
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Publicity officer/Artwork - per hour-Commercial	Admin	\$45.45



Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Publicity officer/Artwork - per hour-Community	Admin	\$45.45
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Front of House Manager / Ticket Seller- per 4 hr session - Monday - Friday-Commercial	Admin	\$140.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Front of House Manager / Ticket Seller- per 4 hr session - Monday - Friday-Community	Admin	\$140.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Front of House Manager / Ticket Seller - per 4 hr session - Saturday-Commercial	Admin	\$178.18
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Front of House Manager / Ticket Seller - per 4 hr session - Saturday-Community	Admin	\$178.18
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Front of House Manager / Ticket Seller - per 4 hr session - Sunday-Commercial	Admin	\$225.45
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Front of House Manager / Ticket Seller - per 4 hr session - Sunday-Community	Admin	\$225.45
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Cleaning Fees - per hour-Commercial	Admin	\$60.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Cleaning Fees - per hour-Community	Admin	\$60.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Ushers - per usher per 4 hr session Monday - Friday-Commercial	Admin	\$120.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Ushers - per usher per 4 hr session Monday - Friday-Community	Admin	\$120.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Ushers - per usher per 4 hr session - Saturday-Commercial	Admin	\$145.45
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Ushers - per usher per 4 hr session - Saturday-Community	Admin	\$145.45
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Ushers - per usher per 4 hr session - Sunday-Commercial	Admin	\$207.27
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Ushers - per usher per 4 hr session - Sunday-Community	Admin	\$207.27
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Programs & Merchandising - per seller unless provided by hirer - Mon-Fri-Commercial	Admin	120.00 plus 10% commission on sales

Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Programs & Merchandising - per seller unless provided by hirer - Mon-Fri-Community	Admin	120.00 plus 10% commission on sales
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Programs & Merchandising - per seller unless provided by hirer - Sat-Commercial	Admin	145.46 plus 10% commission on sales
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Programs & Merchandising - per seller unless provided by hirer - Sat-Community	Admin	145.46 plus 10% commission on merchandise
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Programs & Merchandising - per seller unless provided by hirer - Sun-Commercial	Admin	225.45 plus 10% commission on sales
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Programs & Merchandising - per seller unless provided by hirer - Sun-Community	Admin	225.45 plus 10% commission on sales
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Piano Hire - Concert Grand plus tuning at cost where required-Commercial	Admin	\$150.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Piano Hire - Concert Grand plus tuning at cost where required-Community	Admin	\$150.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Piano Hire - Other Pianos - each - plus tuning at cost where required-Commercial	Admin	\$90.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Piano Hire - Other Pianos - each - plus tuning at cost where required-Community	Admin	\$90.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Data Projector - Per Day - Commercial	Admin	\$500.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Data Projector - Per Day - Community	Admin	\$350.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Ticket Printing/Event Creation per performance	Admin	\$50.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Ticket Printing/Event Creation/Administration Fee per performance - External Events	Admin	\$136.36
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	TICKETING/BOOKING COSTS Credit Card Fee (including handling)	Admin	\$0.02
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Booking Fee - per ticket (1st 20 comps free) \$0-\$20.00 -commercial	Admin	\$2.73
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Booking Fee - per ticket (1st 20 comps free) \$0-\$50.00 -community	Admin	\$2.73

Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Booking Fee - per ticket (1st 20 comps free) \$20-\$50 -commercial	Admin	\$4.55
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Booking Fee - per ticket (1st 20 comps free) \$50.01 & above -commercial	Admin	\$5.45
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Booking Fee - per ticket (1st 20 comps free) \$50.01 & above -community	Admin	\$5.45
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Galleries - Large per week - Commercial	Admin	\$1,890.91
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Galleries - Large per week - Community	Admin	\$954.55
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Galleries - Sitzer or half gallery - Commercial	Admin	\$945.45
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Galleries - Sitzer or half gallery - Community	Admin	\$472.73
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Galleries - For events - per day - Commercial	Admin	\$636.36
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Galleries - For events - per day - Community	Admin	\$318.18
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Exhib Charges - Commisison on sales	Admin	\$0.40
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Exhib Charges -Administration Fee / Exhibition Sales	Admin	\$0.10
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Exhib Charges -Invitation Printing - 1000 and mailing of 800, with the exhibitor paying 50% of the overall total cost	Admin	\$713.63
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Exhib Charges -Invitation Printing - 750 and mailing of 650, with the exhibitor paying 50% of the overall total cost	Admin	\$600.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Exhib Charges -Invitation Printing - 500 and mailing of 500, with the exhibitor paying 50% of the overall total cost	Admin	\$477.27
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Credit Point - For ushers in Araluen Theatre	Admin	\$20 p/hour, min 4hrs
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Arthouse Cinema Ticket Fees - Adults	Admin	\$15.45

Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Arthouse Cinema Ticket Fees - Concessions / Children	Admin	\$12.73
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Entry Charge - Alice Springs Cultural Precinct - Adult	Admin	\$7.27
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Entry Charge - Alice Springs Cultural Precinct - Concession/child	Admin	\$3.64
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Entry Charge - Alice Springs Cultural Precinct - Family	Admin	\$18.18
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Entry Charge - Alice Springs Cultural Precinct - Tour groups	Admin	\$5.45
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Entry Charge - Alice Springs Cultural Precinct - Tour groups -concession	Admin	\$3.64
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Entry Charge - Alice Springs Cultural Precinct - Youth Hostel	Admin	\$3.64
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Araluen Homestead per day including telephone (3 day minimum hire)	Admin	\$0.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Araluen Homestead per week including telephone	Admin	\$0.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Araluen Homestead per month including telephone	Admin	\$0.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	<b>Marrara Indoor Stadium</b>		
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	<b><u>Stadium Hire</u></b>		
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Non Commercial Hourly Rate	Admin	\$99.64
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Non Commercial Daily Rate	Admin	\$1,706.14
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Commercial Hourly Rate	Admin	\$144.11
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Commercial Daily Rate	Admin	\$2,736.41

Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Meeting Room Hourly Rate	Admin	\$18.13
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Total Stadium Grounds Daily Rate	Admin	Included in stadium hire
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Stadium Grounds Segmented	Admin	Included in stadium hire
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Stadium Grounds Hire Daily Rate	Admin	\$554.55
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Stadium Hire- Schools Only rate hourly between 0900 and 1500 only	Admin	\$74.26
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	<u>Equipment Hire - (Individual break down unavailable)</u>		
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	<b>Hidden Valley Motor Sports Complex</b>		
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Track - Private Practice (per 4 Hour session as per Hire Agreement)	Admin	\$103.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Track - Club Event (per event) as per Hire Agreement - per day	Admin	\$524.35
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Race Track- Not for Profit Community Group per Hour	Admin	\$113.74
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Race Track- Not for Profit Community Group per Day	Admin	\$559.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Race Track – Corporate, no spectators per Hour	Admin	\$1,380.49
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Race Track – Corporate, no spectators per Day	Admin	\$250.72
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Entire race complex – Corporate, no spectators per Day	Admin	\$3,764.24
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Entire Race complex – Event with spectators Negotiable - Per Day (Min)	Admin	\$3,423.11
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Garage/Pit Hire per Day	Admin	\$65.62

Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Pit Paddock per Hour	Admin	\$90.41
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Pit Paddock per Day	Admin	\$376.68
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Large Meeting Room per hour	Admin	\$39.37
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Large Meeting Room per day	Admin	\$284.84
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Small Meeting Room per hour	Admin	\$19.16
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Small Meeting Room per Day	Admin	\$113.74
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	CAMS Event fee	Admin	\$515.00
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Bike Training Track full day	Admin	\$93.64
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	Bike Training Track half day	Admin	\$46.81
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	VIP Centre Commerical Daily Per Day	Admin	\$702.27
Community Participation in Sports and the Arts	VIP Centre Non Commerical Per Day	Admin	\$234.09

**ATTACHMENT 2**

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND CULTURE			
REGISTER OF FEES AND CHARGES			
Div	Fee Description	Basis of Fee: Legislation, Regulation, Gazettal, Admin	Fees and Charges (Excluding GST)
			Revenue Unit Value: 1 unit = \$1.18
Territory Wildlife Parks	<b>CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES / BIOPARKS</b>		
Territory Wildlife Park	<b>TERRITORY WILDLIFE PARK (BERRY SPRINGS)</b>		
Territory Wildlife Park	Entry per adult	Legislation	32
Territory Wildlife Park	Entry per child	Legislation	16
Territory Wildlife Park	Entry per Economy Family - 1 adult & 2 children	Admin	54.4
Territory Wildlife Park	Entry per Super Family - 2 adults & 4 children	Admin	87
Territory Wildlife Park	Entry pension/concession	Admin	22.5
Territory Wildlife Park	Entry student (over 15 years with valid student card)	Admin	22.5
Territory Wildlife Park	Entry seniors card	Admin	22.5
Territory Wildlife Park	Entry NT student (school groups)	Admin	0
Territory Wildlife Park	Entry Non NT school and educational institution	Admin	15
Territory Wildlife Park	Territorian Pass per adult	Admin	32
Territory Wildlife Park	Territorian Pass per child	Admin	16
Territory Wildlife Park	Territorian Pass per Student/Concession	Admin	22.5
Territory Wildlife Park	Territorian Pass Seniors Card	Admin	22.5
Territory Wildlife Park	Forest Frenzy	Admin	N/A

Territory Wildlife Park	Nocturnal Nursery	Admin	N/A
Territory Wildlife Park	Nocturnal VIP Adult	Admin	15
Territory Wildlife Park	Nocturnal VIP Child	Admin	10
Territory Wildlife Park	Noturnal VIP Family	Admin	45
Territory Wildlife Park	On the glove	Admin	10
Territory Wildlife Park	Pelican Brekky	Admin	4.55
Territory Wildlife Park	River Rays	Admin	30
Territory Wildlife Park	Animal Encounter	Admin	N/A
Territory Wildlife Park	Camp Calytrix	Admin	N/A
Territory Wildlife Park	Camp Woolybutts	Admin	59.09
Territory Wildlife Park	Camp Woolybutts Accompanying Adults	Admin	50
Territory Wildlife Park	Camp Woolybutts Teachers	Admin	0
Territory Wildlife Park	<b>EVENTS FEES - Parks and Reserves</b>		
Territory Wildlife Park	Picnic Area - adjacent to Main Station	Admin	\$5pp up to \$600 maximum
Territory Wildlife Park	Woolybutt Picnic Area	Admin	\$5pp up to \$600 maximum
Territory Wildlife Park	Aquarium - 1 staff member	Admin	350
Territory Wildlife Park	Aquarium - 3 staff members	Admin	550
Territory Wildlife Park	Flight Deck - Wedding ceremony - 1 staff member	Admin	250
Territory Wildlife Park	Flight Deck - Wedding ceremony - 2 staff members - Animal Encounter	Admin	350
Territory Wildlife Park	Bar Service - 6 Hour Package, BYO drinks -2 staff members	Admin	100 guests \$1000
Territory Wildlife Park	Bar Service - 6 Hour Package, BYO drinks - 3 staff members	Admin	100-200 guests \$1500
Territory Wildlife Park	Bar Service - 6 Hour Package, BYO drinks - 5 staff members	Admin	200- 300 guets \$2500
Territory Wildlife Park	Bar Service - 6 Hour Package, BYO drinks- 6 staff members	Admin	300-400 guets \$3000
Territory Wildlife Park	Animal Encounter	Admin	55
Territory Wildlife Park	Park Location Photo - BYO Photographer - Includes Permit- 2 locations	Admin	250
Territory Wildlife Park	Park Location Photo - BYO Photographer - Includes Permit- Whole Park	Admin	350



Territory Wildlife Park	Additional Items - Bar Units	Admin	50
Territory Wildlife Park	Additional Items - BBQ with Gas Bottle	Admin	60
Territory Wildlife Park	Additional Items - 3 Door Glass Fridge	Admin	60
Territory Wildlife Park	Additional Items - Large Blue Esky (2 Available)	Admin	30
Territory Wildlife Park	Additional Items - Trestle Tables 1.8m Long (8 Available)	Admin	5
Territory Wildlife Park	Additional Items - Extension Leads 30m Long (4 Available)	Admin	10
Territory Wildlife Park	Additional Items - Urn - per day	Admin	15
Territory Wildlife Park	Additional Items - Urn - per person	Admin	2
Territory Wildlife Park	Wild Birthday Parties Per Child (min of 10 children)	Admin	22.5
Territory Wildlife Park	Wild Camp Out Per Adult	Admin	20
Territory Wildlife Park	Wild Camp Out Per Child	Admin	15
Territory Wildlife Park	Twilight Nights Per Adult	Admin	10
Territory Wildlife Park	Twilight Nights Per Child (3+)	Admin	5
Alice Springs Desert Park	<b>ALICE SPRINGS DESERT PARK</b>		
Alice Springs Desert Park	Entry per adult	Legislation	32
Alice Springs Desert Park	Entry per child	Legislation	16
Alice Springs Desert Park	Entry per Economy Family - 1 adult & 2 children	Admin	54.5
Alice Springs Desert Park	Entry per Super Family - 2 adults & 4 children	Admin	87
Alice Springs Desert Park	Entry pension/concession	Admin	22.5
Alice Springs Desert Park	Entry student (over 15 years with valid student card)	Admin	22.5
Alice Springs Desert Park	Entry seniors card	Admin	22.5
Alice Springs Desert Park	Entry NT student (school groups)	Admin	0
Alice Springs Desert Park	Territorian Pass per adult	Admin	32
Alice Springs Desert Park	Territorian Pass per child	Admin	16
Alice Springs Desert Park	Territorian Pass per Student/Concession	Admin	22.5
Alice Springs Desert Park	Territorian Pass Seniors Card	Admin	25.5
Alice Springs Desert Park	Eagle Encounter Single	Admin	30

Alice Springs Desert Park	Eagle Encounter Family	Admin	40
Alice Springs Desert Park	Eagle Encounter 6 Adults	Admin	80
Alice Springs Desert Park	Nocturnal Tour Adult	Admin	45
Alice Springs Desert Park	Nocturnal Tour Child	Admin	28.5
Alice Springs Desert Park	Day Entry and Nocturnal Tour	Admin	62.91
Alice Springs Desert Park	Day & Night Child	Admin	36
Alice Springs Desert Park	Day & Night Student / Concession	Admin	43.86
Alice Springs Desert Park	Day & Night Senior	Admin	50.5
Alice Springs Desert Park	Day & Night Eco Family	Admin	95.86
Alice Springs Desert Park	Day & Night Super Family	Admin	167
Alice Springs Desert Park	Aboriginal Cultural Tour Flat Rate 1- 4 people	Admin	464
Alice Springs Desert Park	Aboriginal Cultural Tour 5 - 9 People Per Adult	Admin	95
Alice Springs Desert Park	Aboriginal Cultural Tour 5 - 9 People Per Child (5-15 years)	Admin	47
Alice Springs Desert Park	Aboriginal Cultural Tour 10 - 15 People Per Adult	Admin	61
Alice Springs Desert Park	Aboriginal Cultural Tour 10 -15 People Per Child (5-15 years)	Admin	30
Alice Springs Desert Park	Aboriginal Cultural Tour 15+ People Per Adult	Admin	47
Alice Springs Desert Park	Aboriginal Cultural Tour 15+ People Per Child (5-15years)	Admin	23
Alice Springs Desert Park	Aboriginal Cultural Tour 15+ People Student/Tertiary Groups	Admin	N/A
Alice Springs Desert Park	Living Desert Per Adult	Admin	150
Alice Springs Desert Park	Living Desert Per Child (5-15 years)	Admin	16
Alice Springs Desert Park	Living Desert Student/Concession	Admin	22.5
Alice Springs Desert Park	Amphitheatre - Evening Hire up to 2 hours Hire	Admin	623
Alice Springs Desert Park	Amphitheatre - Evening Hire up to 4 hours Hire	Admin	868
Alice Springs Desert Park	Away Flat - Day Hire up to 4 Hours	Admin	408
Alice Springs Desert Park	Away Flat - Day Hire up to 8 Hours	Admin	868
Alice Springs Desert Park	Away Flat - Evening Hire up to 4 Hours	Admin	699
Alice Springs Desert Park	Cinema - Day Hire- up to 2 Hours	Admin	459

Alice Springs Desert Park	Cinema - Half Day Hire - Up to 4 Hours	Admin	635
Alice Springs Desert Park	Cinema - Full Day Hire - Up to 8 Hours	Admin	1348
Alice Springs Desert Park	Cinema - Evening Hire - Up to 4 Hours	Admin	9970
Alice Springs Desert Park	Courtyard - Evening Hire - Up to 3 hours	Admin	807
Alice Springs Desert Park	Courtyard - Evening Hire - Up to 5 hours	Admin	1429
Alice Springs Desert Park	Desert Rivers Shelter - Day Hire - Up to 4 Hours	Admin	408
Alice Springs Desert Park	Desert Rivers Shelter - Full Day Hire- Up to 8 Hours	Admin	868
Alice Springs Desert Park	Desert Rivers Shelter - Evening Hire- up to 4 Hours	Admin	699
Alice Springs Desert Park	Entry Foyer - Evening Hire - Up to 2 hours	Admin	378
Alice Springs Desert Park	Entry Foyer - Evening Hire - Up to 4 hours	Admin	N/A
Alice Springs Desert Park	Madigans Function Room - Full Day Hire - Up to 8 Hours	Admin	505
Alice Springs Desert Park	Madigans Function Room - Evening Hire - Up to 3 Hours	Admin	505
Alice Springs Desert Park	Madigans Function Room - Evening Hire - Up to 5 Hours	Admin	633
Alice Springs Desert Park	Meeting Room Full Day Hire	Admin	245
Alice Springs Desert Park	Nocturnal House Cocktails - Evening Hire up to 3 hours	Admin	1588
Alice Springs Desert Park	Nocturnal House Dinner - Evening Hire up to 4 hours	Admin	2170



## 2018 ALICE SPRINGS MASTERS GAMES

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE

#### Terms of Reference

##### BACKGROUND

The Alice Springs Masters Games (The Games), known as *The Friendly Games*, have been held in Alice Springs biannually in October since 1986. The Games attract masters-aged participants in over 30 sports. There are over 700 volunteers and a number of full time Departmental staff employed to deliver the Games.

##### PURPOSE

The Alice Springs Masters Games (ASMG) 2018 Advisory Committee will function in an advisory role to the Department (DTC) and Minister for Tourism and Culture for the delivery of the 2018 Alice Springs Masters Games.

##### SCOPE

- a. To assist in establishing and maintaining constructive relationships between the Alice Springs Masters Games key stakeholders and the wider community.
- b. To engage key stakeholders in Alice Springs to ensure they are informed and supportive of the event.
- c. To provide feedback as plans and concepts for the ASMG 2018 are developed.
- d. To provide a conduit for the dissemination of information to and input from the community and other key stakeholders.
- e. To provide the Minister with regular briefings on the progress of the Games.
- f. To provide feedback and have input into the debrief process following the event.

##### MEMBERSHIP

The Advisory Committee will comprise of six members of the Alice Springs community and chaired by the Director of Events, Department of Tourism and Culture.

##### SELECTION PROCESS

Members will be selected based on the broad skills they can bring to the Committee, e.g. sporting representation, economic and/or community development, tourism and their links to the community. A call for Expressions of Interest will be advertised in local newspapers and on the Alice Springs Masters Games website. Nominees will be asked to fill in a form highlighting their interest in the development of the Alice Springs Masters Games, their links to the community, their broad skillset and their availability to meet. Members will be selected on the basis of their response to the criteria on the Expressions of Interest form.

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## MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

- a. The Chair will be the Director Events, Department of Tourism and Culture.
  - b. The Advisory Committee will meet monthly or as arranged by the Chair at other times.
  - c. DTC will provide secretariat support for the Advisory Committee.
  - d. Agendas will be prepared and distributed to members prior to the meeting, with all members given the opportunity to add items prior to its final distribution or to raise additional items at the meeting to be included on 'Any Other Business'.
  - e. Minutes from each meeting will be prepared and issued to members in draft for comments.
  - f. Finalised minutes will be presented at the meeting with a copy retained on file by DTC.
-

**PROTOCOL FOR ACCESS TO NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT  
RECORDS BY ABORIGINAL PEOPLE RESEARCHING THEIR FAMILIES**

**ABORIGINAL ADVISORY GROUP  
TERMS OF REFERENCE & GUIDELINES**

1. The Aboriginal Advisory Group shall be established to oversee the implementation, management and review of the *Protocol for Access to Northern Territory Government Records by Aboriginal People Researching Their Families* (The Protocol).
2. The Aboriginal Advisory Group shall address issues, policies and practices of Northern Territory Government agencies in providing access to records to Aboriginal people primarily engaged in 'stolen generations research'.
3. The Aboriginal Advisory Group shall consist of the following members:
  - Two members from Link-Up - one from the Top End and one from Central Australia
  - Two community members - one from the Top End and one from Central Australia
  - One member from the Northern Territory Public Sector.

The representatives of the Aboriginal organisations will be the same members as appointed to the Aboriginal Advisory Group for the National Archives of Australia Memorandum of Understanding. Other participants may be co-opted as required and attend meetings as observers.

4. The selection of community representatives shall be undertaken as follows:
    - organizations representing people separated from their families by former government policies will be invited by the Northern Territory Archives Service (on the recommendation of the Advisory Group) to nominate members; and
    - the Aboriginal Advisory Group will consider the nominations and select the two representatives based on their ability to contribute to the Group.
  5. Community representatives shall participate on the Aboriginal Advisory Group for a period of two (2) years. They may re-nominate through the process set out at 4. above.
-

6. Individuals of the signatory groups other than the official representatives may attend meetings of the Aboriginal Advisory Group as observers. Observers may participate in discussion but do not have decision making status.
  7. The Aboriginal Advisory Group shall appoint a chairperson from amongst its representatives who will co-ordinate meetings and activities.
  8. The Aboriginal Advisory Group may nominate committees to address particular issues as they arise. Committees shall report to the Aboriginal Advisory Group and have their findings ratified by the Group.
  9. The Northern Territory Archives Service will provide administrative support to the Aboriginal Advisory Group facilitated through its operational budget.
  10. The Aboriginal Advisory Group will meet in conjunction with meetings of the Aboriginal Advisory Group for the National Archives of Australia Memorandum of Understanding. Meetings will be held approximately every six (6) months or at the request of at least three of its members.
  11. Meeting agenda and papers shall be forwarded to all representatives no later than two weeks prior to scheduled meetings.
  12. Representatives shall forward any proposed amendments to meeting agenda no later than one week prior to scheduled meetings.
  13. Meetings of the Aboriginal Advisory Group require a quorum of four members to proceed.
  14. Minutes of meetings are to be forwarded to representatives no later than two weeks after the meetings have been held. The minutes of each meeting are to be ratified by the Aboriginal Advisory Group at the following meeting.
  15. The minutes and records of the Aboriginal Advisory Group remain confidential and will be maintained by the Northern Territory Archives Service.
  16. When a standing representative is unable to attend a meeting or function, a proxy representative may attend. The proxy representative must receive endorsement to attend the meeting from the signatory group, and be fully briefed by the representative taking absence about all issues under consideration by the Aboriginal Advisory Group.
  17. Correspondence received for the Aboriginal Advisory Group shall be forwarded to all representatives as soon as possible after its receipt.
-

18. The chairperson shall keep all representatives informed of any relevant issues as they come to hand.
19. Decisions of the Aboriginal Advisory Group require the consensus of the majority of representatives present at the meeting. When decisions are required to be made out of session, a majority of representatives must agree to the decision.
20. Media releases by the Aboriginal Advisory Group require the endorsement of the majority of representatives present at the meeting. When a media release is required to be agreed to out of session, a majority of representatives must endorse the media release.
21. The Aboriginal Advisory Group shall decide who, from among its members, will represent it at various forums as required and who will speak publicly on its behalf.

**Issued March 1998**

**Revised November 1998**

**Revised March 1999**

**Revised March 2001**

**Revised August 2008**

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## NT Aboriginal Tourism Advisory Council (ATAC)

### Terms of Reference

#### Purpose

The purpose of the Aboriginal Tourism Advisory Council is to contribute to developing sustainable and prosperous Indigenous tourism enterprises across the Northern Territory, enabling individuals to create or take up meaningful employment and business opportunities and, at the same time, maintain and share their cultural heritage.

#### Role

1. The ATAC will provide strategic advice to the Minister for Tourism and the Board of Tourism NT on issues including, but not limited to:
  - identifying new indigenous tourism products and regions that will cater for demand identified through market – led research.
  - identifying Indigenous tourism enterprise development opportunities including ways by which to build business capacity as well as mechanisms by which to increase the employment of Indigenous people within the tourism industry.
  - identifying opportunities for access to Aboriginal land and communities where there is a willingness by custodians to be involved in the tourism industry and which is supported by research.
  - provide advice on strategic marketing initiatives involving Indigenous tourism.
2. ATAC will ensure the Northern Territory Government has access to a diversity of views. The Council will also engage with other individuals and organisations, as relevant.
3. The Government may request the ATAC to provide advice on specific policy and programme effectiveness, to help ensure that Indigenous tourism programmes achieve real, positive change in the lives of Aboriginal people.
4. ATAC will report annually to the Government on its activities, via letter to the Chief Minister.

#### Membership

1. Members will be Indigenous people who either have genuine tourism industry knowledge and expertise and/or understanding of or experience in matters crucial to the sustainable development of tourism on Indigenous owned land.
  2. ATAC members will recommend to the Minister one of its members to take on the role of Chairperson.
  3. Members will be paid sitting fees and costs related to meeting attendance in line with the framework for a non-statutory body classified as C3: Advisory and Review Bodies/Ministerial assistance.
  4. Membership will be for a term not exceeding one year, after which he or she may be eligible for reappointment.
  5. New members will be appointed by the Minister following consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, Department of Tourism and Culture.
-

6. The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Tourism and Culture is ex officio member.

### **Meetings**

1. The Council will meet at least four times annually with the majority of meetings being held in Alice Springs and Darwin. However, in order for members to gain a comprehensive understanding of regional and remote opportunities, meetings may be held in other locations as required.
2. The deliberation of the Council will be confidential.
3. The quorum for Council meetings will be at least half the members.

### **Secretariat**

1. The Council will be supported by a secretariat from the Department of Tourism and Culture.
-



Northern  
Territory  
Government



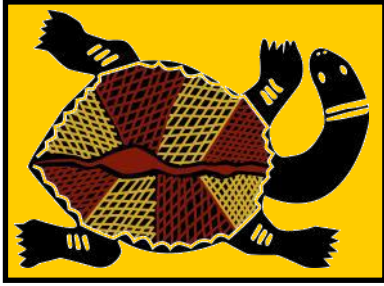
# Adelaide River Conservation Reserves

(includes Fogg Dam, Harrison Dam, Black Jungle/Lambell's Lagoon  
Conservation Reserves and Melacca Swamp Conservation Area)

## Joint Management Plan

August 2014





The Wulna logo was painted by Traditional Owner, David Kenyon. It represents the Lidawi dreaming of the long-necked turtle, which entered the soil at Shady Camp and re-emerged at the Window on the Wetlands site. The turtle then travelled to the rainforest on Litchfield Creek, behind the Wairuk community, where it remains today.

#### Acknowledgements:

The production of this Plan was made possible through the efforts and interests of many individuals and organisations, including the Traditional Owners for the Reserves and other key stakeholders such as the Friends of Fogg Dam. Some Traditional Owners who participated in the planning process are no longer with us, but their significant contribution is greatly appreciated.

#### Warning to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

This Plan contains images of Traditional Owners, some of whom are now deceased.

Adelaide River Conservation Reserves Joint Management Plan  
Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory  
PO Box 496  
PALMERSTON NT 0831

This document is available at: [www.parksandwildlife.nt.gov.au](http://www.parksandwildlife.nt.gov.au)

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Cover images: A visitor at Fogg Dam (top left - photo © Michael J Barritt), Lambells Lagoon (top right), Fogg Dam Sunset (bottom centre - photo courtesy of S. Brokke)

## Executive Summary

### The Reserves and their values

The Adelaide River Conservation Reserves include Fogg Dam, Harrison Dam, Black Jungle / Lambell's Lagoon Conservation Reserves, and Melacca Swamp Conservation Area. These Reserves provide some of the most accessible places in the Northern Territory to experience the spectacular wetlands of the Top End at any time of the year. They are located approximately 65 km east of Darwin and encompass 11,500 ha (or 8%) of the lower Adelaide River catchment.

The primary value of the Adelaide River Conservation Reserves is that they support a living cultural landscape made up of diverse coastal and freshwater wetlands, which provides significant tourism and recreational opportunities. Harrison Dam and Lambell's Lagoon are two of the few Reserves in the Northern Territory where recreational hunting is permitted.

The wetland habitats have a high conservation value, supporting rare and threatened species, large and diverse waterbird populations, monsoon rainforests, saltwater crocodile breeding areas, and the world's highest recorded biomass of predator (water python) and prey (dusky rat) species.

The wetlands and associated landscapes include sites and landscapes of ritual, mythological and spiritual significance to Wulna Traditional Owners, and they have long been a source of abundant traditional foods, medicines and other resources for them. These Reserves also contain historical sites relating to World War II, and the development of the Northern Territory's agricultural industry.

### Purpose of the Reserves

The Adelaide River Conservation Reserves provide quality visitor experiences, while protecting the diverse estuarine and freshwater wetlands for future generations. Joint management allows greater Traditional Owner involvement and economic participation. The unique values of the Reserves and their proximity to Darwin also provide opportunities for the development of niche eco-tourism ventures.

### Key Management Priorities

This is the first Joint Management Plan to be prepared for this group of Reserves. Its purpose is to provide management aims and directions, and guide operational planning and annual programs. The joint management partners will work together to:

- provide opportunities for visitors to safely enjoy the iconic wetlands of the Top End;
- investigate new opportunities for tourism and commercial developments that are sustainable and managed to protect the environment;
- help maintain Wulna traditional knowledge and values by incorporating these into the Reserves' management programs;
- protect the outstanding natural values of the Reserves, particularly the wetland and floodplain systems and remnant monsoon rainforest patches;
- provide opportunities for recreational hunting;
- protect and encourage appreciation of the Reserves' cultural and historical sites and values; and
- engage the broader community in the management of the Reserves.

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## Vision for Adelaide River Conservation Reserves

*“Our amazing wetlands are enjoyed by future generations, they are in great health and provide a strong economic base for Traditional Owners.”*

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 The Reserves and Their Values

The Adelaide River Conservation Reserves are located approximately 65 km east of Darwin (Map 1) and encompass 11,500 ha (or 8%) of the lower Adelaide River catchment. The Reserves include Fogg Dam, Harrison Dam, Black Jungle / Lambell’s Lagoon Conservation Reserves, and Melacca Swamp Conservation Area.

The key values include:

**Tourism and Recreation** - The Reserves provide one of the most accessible places in the NT to experience the spectacular wetlands of the Top-End all year round. They provide significant opportunities for tourism, including bird-watching, hunting and interpretation due to their proximity to Darwin. Approximately 80,000 visits are made to the Reserves each year, with the main tourist attraction being the wetland wildlife and habitats at Fogg Dam. Recreational hunting at Lambell’s Lagoon and Harrison Dam is also popular with locals.

**Cultural** - The Reserves include traditional lands of the Wulna people. The Reserves are living cultural landscapes which include sacred sites and dreaming trails that cross the broader Adelaide River area linking places and people. Aboriginal archaeological sites, mainly shell middens, are also located in the Reserves. These sites and the associated knowledge and traditions, demonstrate the long and significant connection Traditional Owners have with this area.

**Natural** - These Reserves encompass a range of wetland types and part of the internationally significant Adelaide River floodplain. The Reserves support large numbers of wildlife, as well as populations of threatened species, and provide breeding habitats for wetland birds and saltwater crocodiles. Springs and permanent water sources maintain pockets of rainforest and provide a Dry season refuge for waterbirds. The floodplains of Fogg Dam have the highest recorded biomass (combined weight) of predator (water python *Liasis fuscus*) and prey (dusky rat *Rattus colletti*) species in the world

**Historical** - The Reserves contain remnants of the Humpty Doo rice growing project, including pumping equipment, channels and levees, which are on the NT Heritage Register. While the rice project ultimately failed, the ruins are a reminder of early attempts to establish a modern agricultural industry in the Top End. There are also several sites of historic interest associated with World War II.



## 1.2 Purpose of the Reserves

The Adelaide River Conservation Reserves provide quality visitor experiences, while protecting the diverse estuarine and freshwater wetlands for future generations. Joint management allows greater Traditional Owner involvement and economic participation. The unique values of the Reserves and proximity to Darwin also provide opportunities for the development of niche eco-tourism ventures.

## 1.3 Reservation Status

The Reserves comprise a number of individual conservation areas including Fogg Dam, Harrison Dam, Black Jungle and Lambell's Lagoon Conservation Reserves, and Melacca Swamp Conservation Area. Land tenure differs between each Reserve, and includes Freehold Title, Special Purpose Leases and Crown Leases in Perpetuity. Land ownership for most of the Reserves rests with the Conservation Land Corporation. Details of the reservation status for land parcels in the Adelaide River group of Reserves are listed in Appendix 1.

Prior to 2005, the Reserves were managed by the Parks and Wildlife Commission. In June 2005, the individual Reserves were listed in Schedule 3 of the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*. The tenure of these areas has not been changed; however, they are now jointly managed by the Northern Territory and Wulna Traditional Owners.

Additional areas of vacant crown land adjacent to Fogg Dam and Lambell's Lagoon have also been set aside for conservation and are managed by the Parks and Wildlife Commission. These portions may be added to the Reserves and included in the joint management arrangements during the life of this Plan. This Plan will also apply to those areas.



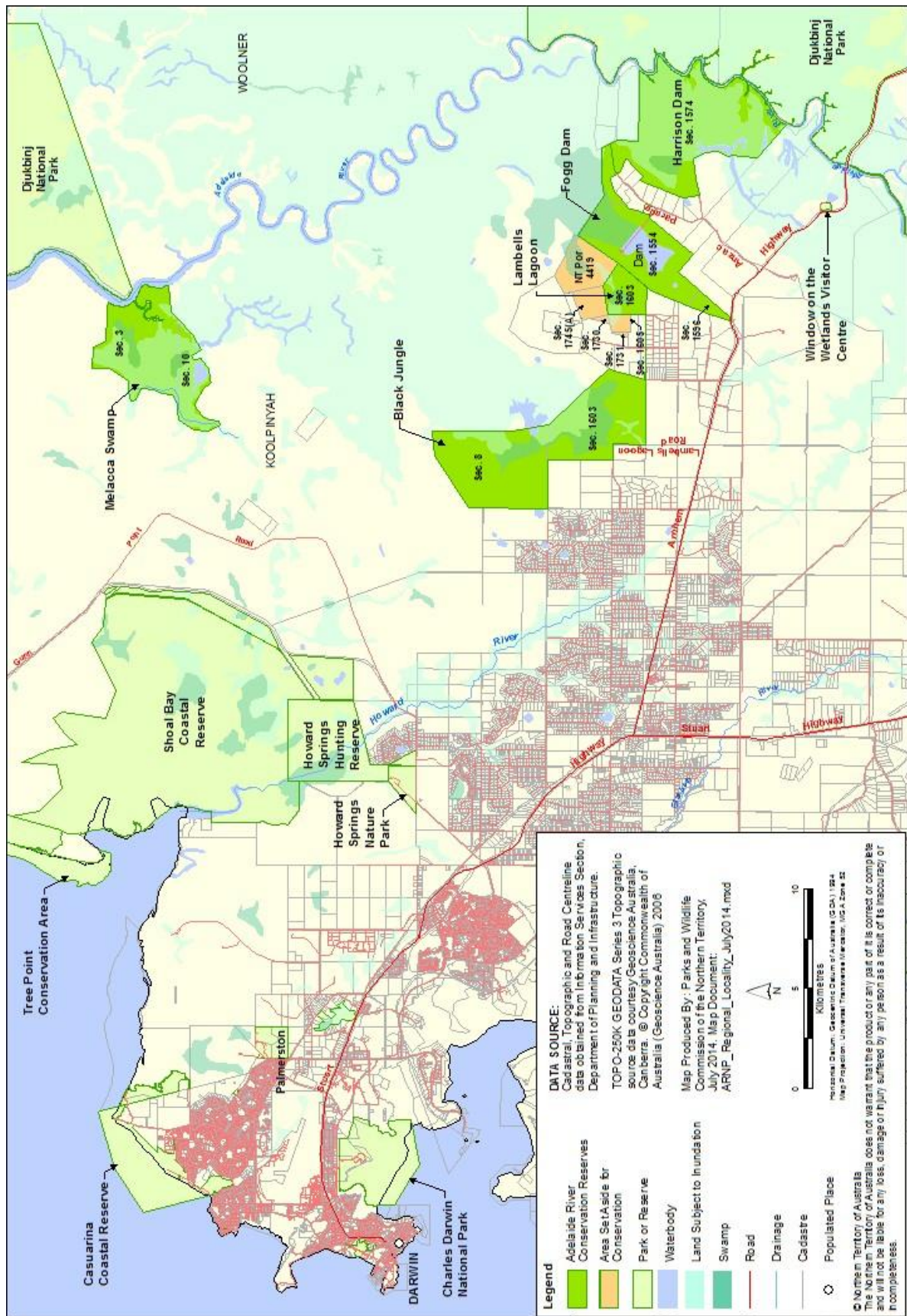
*Fogg Dam is a popular place for bird watchers.*

This is the first Joint Management Plan for the Reserves, and it has been developed by the Parks and Wildlife Commission and Traditional Owners, with assistance from the Northern Land Council (NLC). It was prepared in accordance with the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* (TPWC Act) and Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUA) registered with the National Native Title Tribunal pursuant to the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cwlth)*. This Plan will remain in effect until amended or replaced by a new plan.

This Plan sets objectives and directions for the management and development of the Reserves over the life of this plan. It provides the primary framework against which management performance will be measured.

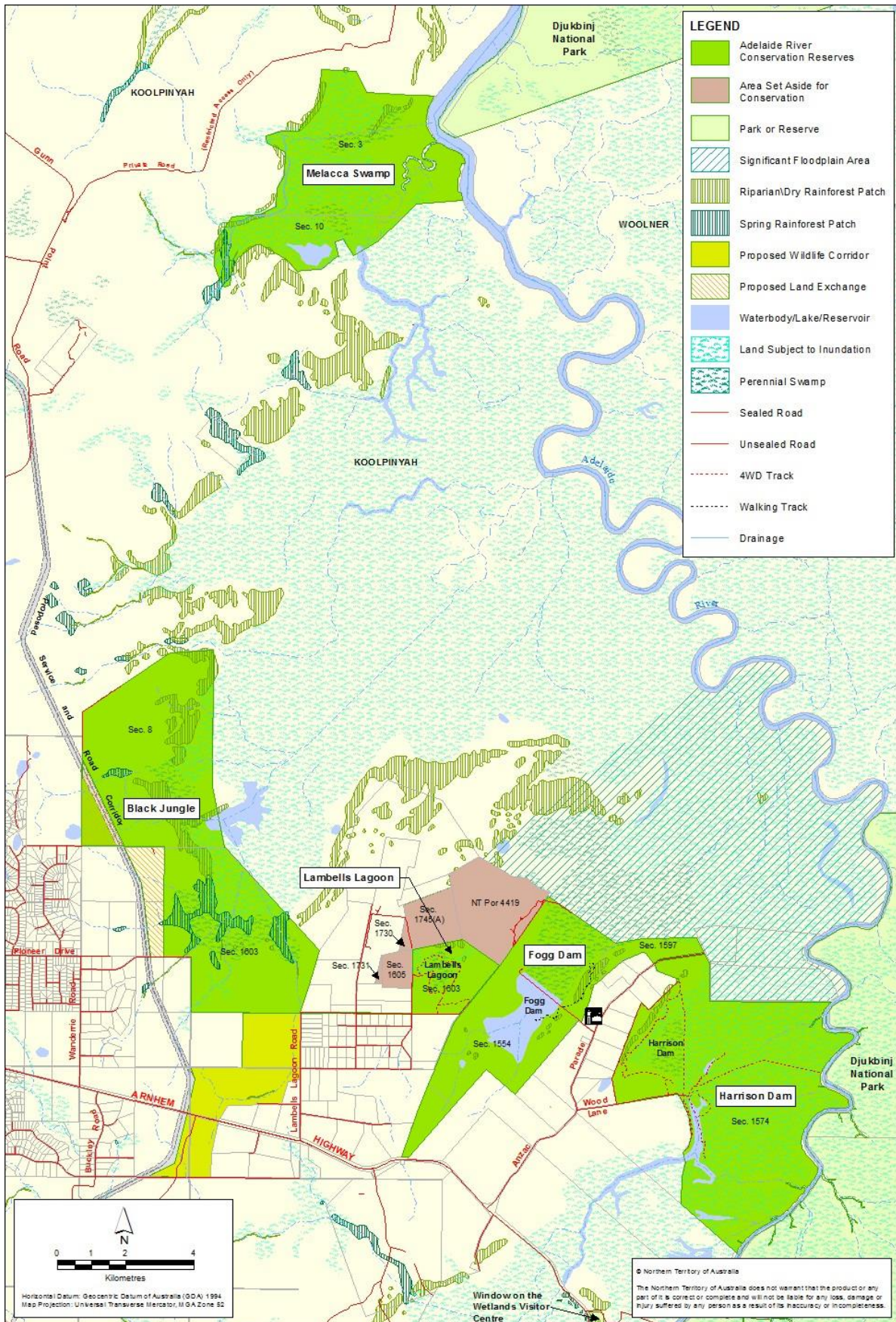


**Map 1:** Location of the Adelaide River Conservation Reserves





**Map 2: Location and Features of the Adelaide River Conservation Reserves**



## 1.4 Zoning

The Adelaide River Conservation Reserves are managed for multiple purposes. A zoning scheme is a general summary of the purpose and focus of management based on the values, level of visitor access and facility development.

The zoning scheme (Table 1 and Map 3) indicates the management intent at the time of this Plan's preparation. It is not intended to be the basis for regulation of access or development.

### Objectives:

- Reserve values are protected whilst providing for public access and enjoyment.

### Management Directions:

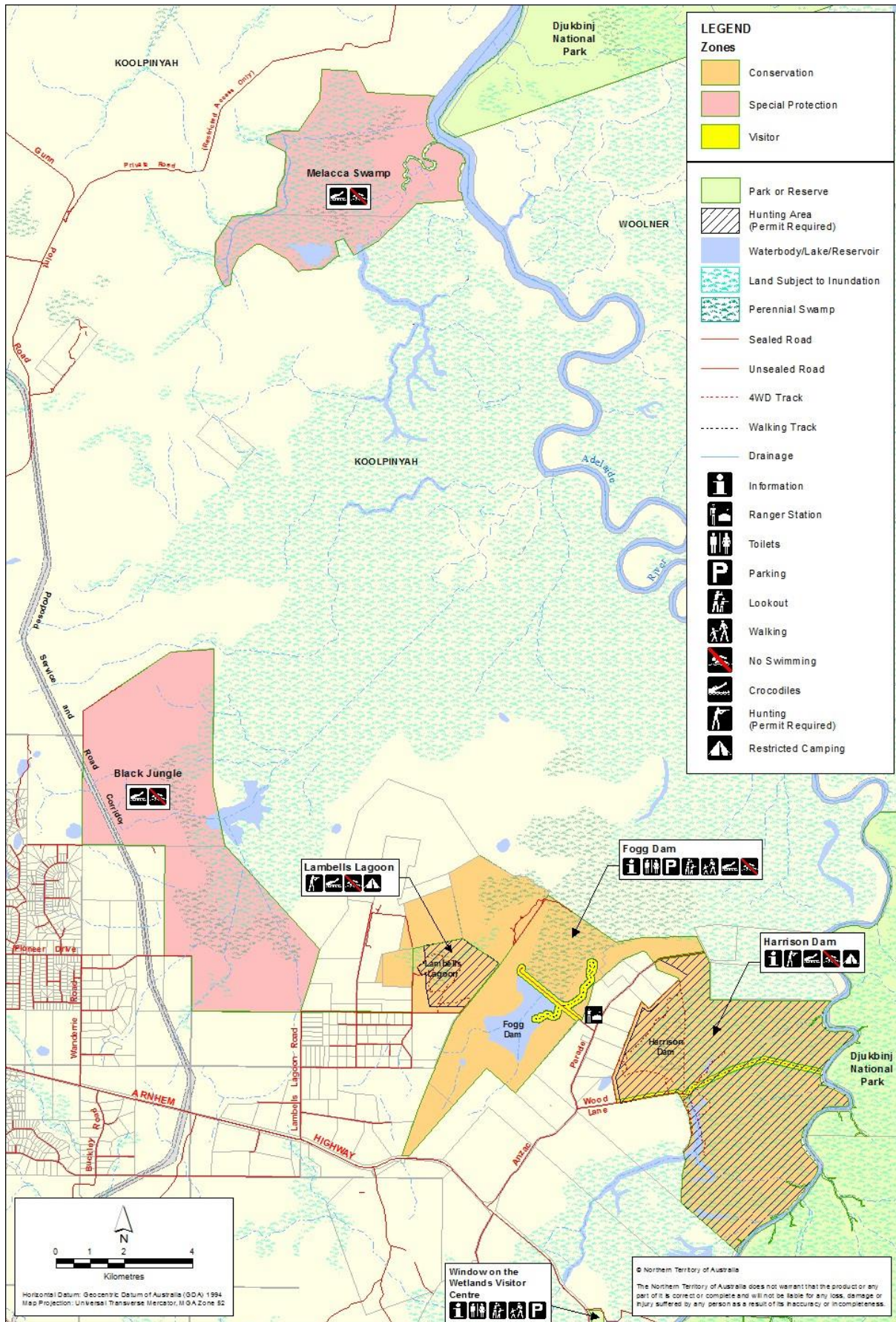
- Management of the Reserves will be in accordance with the zoning scheme. Regardless of the designated zone, all management and development will maintain the Reserves' natural character, conservation values and visitor experiences.
- Any new proposed development will be subject to approval of the partners, the relevant environmental and cultural heritage clearances and protection measures, and any relevant laws.

**Table 1: Zoning for Adelaide River Conservation Reserves**

Zone	Visitor Zone	Conservation Zone	Special Protection Zone
<b>Purpose / Management Focus</b>	The area where the main visitor access and facilities are located. Where visitors can safely experience and enjoy the main attractions of the Reserves.	Provides opportunities for visitors to experience more natural settings in less crowded surroundings.	Includes significant natural and cultural values that require special management and that are particularly prone to disturbance or damage.
<b>Access</b>	All-weather conventional vehicle access and formed walking tracks.	Access is permitted along designated vehicle and walking tracks and in other areas by permit.	Public access by permit only. Access for approved programs and for cultural activities for Traditional Owners, consistent with the directions of the joint management partners.
<b>Visitor Activities</b>	A range of visitor attractions that offer high quality recreational experiences are provided in this zone, including, bird- watching, and walking.	At Fogg Dam this zone is expected to largely cater for local recreation and small specialist tour operators with a permit.  At Harrison Dam and Lambell's Lagoon this zone includes areas where hunting of waterfowl and pigs is allowed under permit. Restricted camping will also be allowed in these Reserves.	The primary activities in these areas are research, education and, at specific sites, commercial sustainable use of wildlife (saltwater crocodile egg collection) under permit.
<b>Facilities</b>	Sealed car and coach parking, public toilets, walking tracks and boardwalks, viewing platforms and interpretive signs.	Basic visitor facilities are provided including formed walking tracks and vehicle tracks.	Facilities and developments are limited to access tracks, protective site works and management facilities.



**Map 3: Zoning within the Adelaide River Conservation Reserves**



## 2. Joint Management

Joint management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Commission working together to achieve shared goals and aspirations, including richer visitor experiences, protection of natural and cultural values, and more opportunities for Traditional Owners.

The terms of joint management for these Reserves are established under the *TPWC Act* Part III, four ILUAs (each for a term of 99 years), and a Joint Management Agreement.

### 2.1 Joint Management Partners

The joint management partners (the partners) for the Adelaide River Conservation Reserves are the Northern Territory of Australia (Territory) and the Traditional Aboriginal Owners (Traditional Owners). The Territory is represented by the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory, which carries out the Territory's joint management obligations. For the purposes of this Joint Management Plan, references to the Parks and Wildlife Commission as a joint management partner should be read as a reference to the Territory.

The Northern Land Council (NLC) has an important role in assisting with joint management of the Reserves. Under the *TPWC Act*, the NLC's role includes representing and protecting the interests of the Traditional Owners in relation to the Reserves' management.

#### Traditional Owners

##### *"Land is our life, we aren't going anywhere, we're here to stay" The Wulna People*

The Wulna people are the Traditional Owners and signatories to the Indigenous Land Use Agreements for the Adelaide River Conservation Reserves.

The Wulna have lived and worked on the land for many generations and have a long association with the area. Their traditional rights, responsibilities, and obligations to look after their land, culture, and families have been handed down through the generations in accordance with accepted traditions and cultural practice. These traditions govern how people relate to country, and set out their rights and responsibilities to look after country through ceremony, sustainable use of resources, and relationships within and between the groups.

Continuing to respect and exercise their responsibilities and obligations under traditional law is at the forefront of Traditional Owners' aspirations for joint management. While the Traditional Owners respect and observe ancient traditions, they have a contemporary culture and live in a modern society, so their aspirations also extend to opportunities to generate livelihoods for themselves and their families from their traditional lands.

The Wulna people welcome the opportunity to work together with the Parks and Wildlife Commission jointly managing the Adelaide River Conservation Reserves into the future.



*Some of the Traditional Owners involved in preparing this Plan*



## The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission

The Parks and Wildlife Commission is dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural values of parks and reserves, while providing high-quality nature-based tourism and recreation for visitors. The Parks and Wildlife Commission is committed to engaging the public, working with the community and seeing that the joint management partnership grows, becomes truly equitable and benefits the wider community. This Plan has been developed by the joint management partners in a positive spirit and they are optimistic about the future of these Reserves.

## 2.2 Planning and Decision Making

*“We’ve got to look at all these ideas we are talking about now... we’ve got to start listening to each other and supporting each other. It is a big job. Everyone has to play a part. We have to work together.” The Wulna People*

For the purposes of joint management, the term governance is defined as “the way the partners organise themselves and the rules they put in place to realise their shared vision”.

The partners acknowledge that it takes time to build a strong working relationship. They recognise the need for institutional support and capacity building to develop effective governance. Consequently the partners agree that having a flexible approach to decision making is important, and consider the following principles for working together to be vital:

- Both partners are responsible for making joint management work and are committed to that objective.
- Both partners accept that an understanding of country, law, culture and Indigenous decision-making principles are fundamental to good joint management.
- When making decisions, both partners use a clear process, follow guidelines, use good information and have enough time to consider decisions properly.
- Both partners listen to each other and communicate honestly.

Clear **roles and responsibilities** are essential for joint management and each of the partners have responsibilities for looking after the Reserves in accordance with both traditional Aboriginal laws and Territory or Commonwealth legislation applicable in the Northern Territory.

The **joint management partners** are, together, responsible for the management of the Reserves, and must monitor and review this management against the objectives and management directions in this Plan.

The **Parks and Wildlife Commission** is responsible for the implementation of the day-to-day management of the Reserves as outlined in this Plan and is required to finance and resource the Reserves’ ongoing management. The Parks and Wildlife Commission will report progress annually to the joint management partners, liaise with stakeholders and neighbours, monitor management effectiveness, and modify management according to new information, improved procedures, new technology and new threats or issues.

**Traditional Owners** are responsible to the land, law and culture. They retain special responsibilities for decision-making and also oversee cultural protocols for sacred sites. They are responsible for country, and for managing and transferring traditional knowledge. Senior Traditional Owners have specific responsibilities and must be involved in matters which affect sacred sites.

***“Pride – we want to be able to stand tall and proud as Wulna people” The Wulna People***

The **Northern Land Council** represents Traditional Owners’ interests, arranges and carries out consultations, assists with monitoring joint management processes and helps resolve differences between Traditional Owners if needed.

A **Joint Management Committee** has been formed to govern the Reserves. The Committee provides strategic direction and policy for Reserves’ management, but does not have a direct role in day-to-day operations. Membership of the Committee consists of two senior Parks officers and Traditional Owner representatives from each of the three family groups in the Reserves.

Committee members have a responsibility to represent the collective expertise, interests and concerns of their group. They also have a responsibility to pass information back to the wider Traditional Owner group, local community and key stakeholders. The Parks and Wildlife Commission will maintain regular formal and informal contact and engagement with joint management partners throughout the year. The NLC will provide support if required.

A key principle of joint management is respect for traditional decision-making; at all times, Traditional Owners will have a fair and appropriate say in the management of these Reserves.

***“We need to look at the long term process. We aren’t going to go anywhere, this is our land.” The Wulna People***



*Members of the Joint Management Committee discussing the management of the Adelaide River Conservation Reserves*

## 2.3 Indigenous Training, Employment and Enterprise Development

***“We have a lot of opportunities on these parks. We want a strong economic base to provide employment and training, so we are better able to participate in the society we live in” The Wulna People***

One of the aims of joint management is to promote employment and business for Aboriginal people. Traditional Owners emphasise training and employment for their families and acknowledge their responsibility to support young people. In doing so, they have identified numerous opportunities for greater involvement in Reserve management. These include, but are not limited to, flexible employment, contracting work, guided tours, and fostering tourism business ventures.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission is committed to increasing employment of Wulna people in the Reserves and will make every effort to do so, in accordance with any laws and policies in force in the Northern Territory.

Just as Traditional Owners emphasise the importance of training and employment for their families, they recognise there are limited opportunities to be employed as Rangers. For that reason the joint management partners will explore opportunities for employment of Traditional Owners in a diversity of industries across the wider district.

Traditional Owners are keen to be involved in contract work. Under the ILUA, the Northern Territory Government must give preference to the participation of the Traditional Owners in any commercial activities under the lease, subject to any law in force in the Northern Territory. Where capacity is lacking, the partners can work with local Aboriginal organisations and training providers to help develop their skills and capability.

Traditional Owners are looking to develop tourism opportunities. The Reserves provide excellent opportunities for Traditional Owners to present their culture to visitors from all over Australia and the world. Traditional Owners have experience with tourism business through managing the Window on the Wetlands Visitor Centre and as part of Ranger training programs. The Parks and Wildlife Commission has also assisted them in developing their skills at presenting walks and talks to tourists.

Traditional Owners are optimistic about the opportunities to develop tourism businesses based on their traditional lands. Joint management provides a sustained platform for the partners and the wider community to exchange ideas develop tourism ventures and reinforce progress. They hope liaison with tourism industry partners and supporting organisations such as NLC, the Department of Business, and Tourism NT will assist them to generate viable businesses.



*Rangers installing a new entry sign*



**Objectives:**

- An equitable and effective partnership that result in well-informed and timely decisions.
- The partners and community are satisfied with joint management.

**Management Directions:**

- **Joint Management Committee** – The Committee will meet at least once each year; the structure will remain flexible and adapt to the needs of the partners and their shared vision. At all times Wulna people will have a fair and appropriate say in the management of these Reserves.
- **Making decisions** – Decisions will be made by consensus. The NLC will represent and support Traditional Owners’ interests and facilitate consultations as required.
- **Expert advisory groups and working groups** – Working groups of Wulna people, staff from the Parks and Wildlife Commission, NLC officers, and specialists may be formed to support the Committee, or address specific tasks such as heritage conservation and interpretation, tourism and development projects.
- **Dispute resolution** – The joint management partners will aim to resolve disputes through open discussion and communication at the Joint Management Committee level.
- **Supporting and building effective governance** - The joint management partners recognise that joint management will be a process of continuous learning and growth. The capacity of the partners will be enhanced by:
  - **Training in good governance** – The joint management partners will be encouraged to participate in training in governance principles and procedures.
  - **Professional development** – Professional standards and competencies will be supported by training in aspects of operational management as required.
  - **Performance monitoring** – The joint management partners will annually measure the effectiveness of participation, representation, communication, decision-making and outcomes.
- **Indigenous training, employment and enterprise development** – Training and employment opportunities, including direct and flexible employment, contracts and enterprise will be pursued by the partners. An ongoing program, based on Traditional Owners’ interests and capacity, will be determined and reviewed annually by the partners. Programs will aim to coordinate accredited training and business development available through other agencies.
  - **Tourism enterprises** – Traditional Owners will be encouraged to build their tourism skills and capacity, build partnerships and develop commercial opportunities.
  - **Indigenous employment opportunities** – Opportunities for both flexible and direct employment and training will continue to identified and provided for Wulna people.
  - **Contract services** – Subject to the relevant laws in force in the Northern Territory, the joint management partners will give preference to the Traditional Owners, and other Aboriginal people, companies and organisations when contracting services, provided they demonstrate the capacity to meet contract standards. Other contractors who provide training and employment to local Aboriginal people will also be regarded favourably.
- **Aboriginal training and employment** – This issue will remain a standing item at annual Joint Management Committee meetings.

## 3. Providing for People

### 3.1 Visitors and Tourism

The Adelaide River Conservation Reserves provide some of the most accessible places in the NT to experience the spectacular wetlands of the Top End at any time of the year. Increased visitation and use of national parks delivers regional economic benefits, as well as greater visitor awareness and understanding of natural values, ultimately contributing to better long term conservation outcomes. The Reserves are conveniently located approximately 65 kilometres (about one hour's drive) from Darwin.

Around 80,000 visitors enjoy the Reserves each year, with the main tourist attraction being the wetland wildlife and habitats at Fogg Dam. The Reserves support remarkable landscapes that typify the internationally recognised image of the Top End. In many ways these Reserves have been over-shadowed by the more distant wetland experiences offered at Kakadu National Park. Like Kakadu, these Reserves are enhanced by the continued connection of Traditional Owners with their country, adding further vibrancy and richness to the landscape.

The Reserves offer a unique blend of both natural and cultural experiences consistent with the Northern Territory tourism industry's strategic strengths. Of inbound visitors to Australia, 61% selected nature-based activities as the primary purpose of their visit. Indigenous culture is also a major drawcard for both international tourists and domestic visitors. Tourism research suggests 91% of visitors to the NT expect to meet and interact with Indigenous people, with 77% of those considering this an important part of their NT holiday.

Fogg Dam is currently a destination for visitors' en-route to Kakadu, and for those taking shorter tours, such as an Adelaide River cruise. Visitor surveys (August 2007) show that about 65% of visitors to Fogg Dam are from interstate, and 25% are from overseas. The surveys suggest that a third of visitors had not planned to visit Fogg Dam and 77% of visitors were satisfied or very satisfied with their visit.

#### 3.1.1 Access and Facilities

**Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve** is a focus for wetland and wildlife visitor experiences. Current facilities are designed for day visits. The elevated dam wall is the centre of visitor activity, providing a raised, single-lane sealed road along which visitors can drive. It enables excellent views of the floodplains and the impounded section of the dam from two wildlife-viewing shelters along the wall, and a large two-story lookout (Pandanus Knoll) at the western end.



*The elevated dam wall at Fogg Dam provides a raised, single-lane sealed road along which visitors can drive (Photo: © Michael J Barritt)*

A visitor node is located at the eastern end of the dam wall, and includes a parking area for vehicles and buses, a group shelter, small interpretation shelter and composting toilet.

There are two walks signposted at Fogg Dam. The 'Woodlands to Waterlily Walk' is 2.2 kilometres (return), beginning in the fringing forest and then passing, via a boardwalk, into the wetland created by the dam walls. There are signs and lookouts along the way. The 'Monsoon Forest Walk' winds through a variety of habitats including monsoon paperbark forests and floodplains. The walk is 3.6 kilometres in length and includes boardwalks and signs.

There are a number of management issues associated with Fogg Dam that need to be addressed to ensure it remains a safe, high quality destination for visitors:

- The key natural values of Fogg Dam need to be maintained so it continues to provide suitable habitat for large numbers of waterbirds, and continues to attract visitors. Key threats include weeds, wildfires, feral animals, saltwater intrusion, groundwater extraction and intensification of surrounding land use.
- The risk of saltwater crocodile attack means the dam wall is closed to pedestrians, unless they have parked on the wall and are entering viewing shelters.
- Traffic congestion occurs on the single lane road on the dam wall during peak visitor periods, especially when caravans and coaches are present.
- The edges of the dam wall are soft and prone to erosion during high rainfall events, and usually require repairs after each Wet season.
- Road signage directing visitors to the Reserves, particularly along the Arnhem Highway, is vague and fails to promote the visitor opportunities available in the Reserves.

**Harrison Dam and Lambell's Lagoon Conservation Reserves** are designated recreational hunting areas. They are also popular bird watching areas outside of the hunting season. No visitor facilities are provided in these areas and vehicle access requires a high clearance four-wheel drive.

**Melacca Swamp Conservation Area and Black Jungle Conservation Reserve** protect significant species and habitats, and access to these sites is currently restricted to scientific research, organised groups with permits, and licensed operators collecting crocodile eggs. No visitor facilities are provided in these areas.

Visitors to the Reserves occasionally commit offences against the *TPWC Act* or *TPWC By-laws*, with the most common ones being illegal hunting, illegal access, off-road driving, and bringing dogs into the Reserves without a permit. To address these problems the partners may consider the introduction of surveillance cameras, increased patrolling and other means to encourage compliance.

### 3.1.2 Future Opportunities

The changing composition of the NT's visitor markets and shifts in customer preferences present new opportunities. The location and values offered by Adelaide River Conservation Reserves are well placed to capitalise on the increasing domestic trend towards short-break experiences, and a declining demand for regional tourism experiences from international tourists. Consistent with NT Tourism Vision 2020, the Parks and Wildlife Commission prepared a Tourism and Recreation Masterplan in 2014 to guide investment toward identified tourism opportunities.

Traditional Owners are keen to use the iconic wetlands and their rich cultural heritage to provide unique tourism experiences and products. Visitors expect rewarding immersive experiences and seek to connect with the environment and Aboriginal culture on a personal level. The Reserves'

proximity to Darwin, iconic landscapes and cultural values present significant tourism opportunities. Fogg Dam has the potential to be recognised as a “must do” visitor experience for short-stay visitors to Darwin and the Top End.

The partners recognise that collaborative and well-considered tourism planning is essential to unlock the full potential of the Reserves. It is important that all plans align with NT wide visitor strategies and provide clear directions for sustainable tourism development and investment. To deliver quality experiences, services and infrastructure several phases of planning may be required.

***“We’ve got to set up businesses, not only for us but for our next generation. We share Tourism’s vision (Tourism NT)... a future for our children” The Wulna People***

Currently there are no commercial operations within the Reserves. Traditional Owners recognise tourism as one of the few industries that can potentially provide sustainable economic and social independence through jobs, education, training and business ownership. Also, as highlighted by the Friends of Fogg Dam, the potential of bird watching tourism could be better promoted as Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve has an international reputation amongst birdwatchers and highlighted in numerous bird-watching guidebooks.

***“A collection of (tourism) experiences as stand-alone ventures might not succeed alone but together they have strength – and we could work through the different seasons.”  
The Wulna People***

Traditional Owners are interested in integrating a range of “adventure based” activities such as specialised wildlife and bird watching, airboat tours, hunting, barramundi fishing, and tours focusing on native cuisine/bush-tucker, indigenous culture, local history and heritage. These activities could occur within and between the Reserves all year round in response to the changing seasons.



*The Reserves have potential to offer new recreational activities (Photo: Tourism NT)*

Commercial opportunities could be enhanced by developing partnerships with existing businesses (such as specialist tour companies and cruise operators), or offering tailored packages from Darwin (e.g. for conferences, working holidaymakers and the education market).

***“We want to see TOs as TOs. That is tour operators and owners of their own enterprises” Bob Furner (Department of Business NT)***

### **3.1.3 Hunting**

Recreational hunting is permitted at Harrison Dam and Lambell’s Lagoon and is regulated through a permit system. It is managed in accordance with the *TPWC Act* and *By-laws*, the Strategy for Conservation through the Sustainable Use of Wildlife (PWCNT 1997), and the Magpie Goose Management Program (Delaney et al 2009).

**Waterfowl hunting** - Magpie Geese and certain ducks are hunted at both Harrison Dam and

Lambell's Lagoon. Waterfowl are hunted very late in the Dry season (September to December) between sunrise and sunset. The open season is dependent upon population numbers and habitat condition. Due to the environmental toxicity of lead shot only non-toxic shot can be used for waterfowl hunting. Dogs are permitted into Harrison Dam and Lambell's Lagoon during the season if the owner has a Waterfowl Hunting permit.

**Pig hunting** - Pigs can be hunted year round at Harrison Dam; however, they are primarily hunted during the Dry season (May to October) when pigs are concentrated near remaining water and there is easier access to the floodplains.

In 2013, 2070 permits for waterfowl hunting were issued for Harrison Dam, Lambell's Lagoon, Howard Springs Hunting Reserve and the nearby Shoal Bay Coastal Reserve, and 383 pig hunting permits were issued for Harrison Dam and Shoal Bay. It is not known how many hunters specifically hunted at Harrison Dam and Lambell's Lagoon; however, the overall number of hunting permits being issued has increased in recent years.

Shooting exclusion zones exist along the western and southern boundaries of Lambell's Lagoon, and the north-western boundary of Harrison Dam to protect the residents of these neighbouring blocks. Intensification of land use around the Reserves could conflict with recreational hunting in the long term. In collaboration with hunters and the local community, new hunting areas and buffer zones may need to be determined.

A number of issues surround recreational hunting in the Reserves, including shooting of non-target species, exceeding bag limits, use of lead shot, and hunting without a permit. Park Rangers, Wildlife Management Officers, NT Police and hunting associations will continue to collaborate to strengthen compliance and ensure sustainable use of the Reserves.

Since 2009 the Field and Game Association of the NT has conducted weed, fire and litter management in Harrison Dam and Lambell's Lagoon. The Parks and Wildlife Commission and the Field and Game Association will continue their collaborations in the future.

### **3.1.4 Visitor Safety**

Rangers are trained in emergency response and advanced first aid, and regularly patrol the main visitor areas to monitor facilities and visitor behaviour. They maintain facilities to the highest practicable standards for visitor safety. Rangers are supported in their management of visitor safety through an Emergency Response Plan. Incidents are reported centrally and Park management adheres to the Parks and Wildlife Commission's Work, Health and Safety Guidelines and Hazard Reduction Guidelines. The effective implementation of this system requires sufficient resources and trained, competent staff.

Saltwater crocodiles occur in areas frequented by visitors. They pose a serious threat to waterfowl hunters, and also to pedestrians on the dam wall at Fogg Dam. Swimming is not permitted in any part of the Reserves and warning signs are present in those areas used by the public. Crocodiles present a safety risk to hunters, especially when hunters wade into the water to retrieve shot birds or to flush game. Traps are maintained at Fogg and Harrison Dam all year, and captured crocodiles are removed.

A Crocodile Management Plan has been prepared for the Fogg Dam, Black Jungle and Lambell's Lagoon Conservation Reserves and Melacca Swamp Conservation Area (NTG 2011). A Crocodile Management Plan is yet to be developed for Harrison Dam.





*Rangers and Wildlife Officers actively manage crocodiles within the Reserves*

## 3.2 Aboriginal Use

### 3.2.1 Continuing Connections to Country

***“We are a bit like a tree – a banyan tree – it’s where our roots are connected. We’re connected to the rivers and billabongs – we are tied to the land. Our stories. Our culture. Our story lines. We’re connected to it”. The Wulna People***

Living on country and travelling across country are important ways through which Wulna Traditional Owners maintain connection with their country. Some Wulna Traditional Owners have maintained a constant presence on country despite significant dispossession through colonisation. Until the last three or four decades, Traditional Owners and their ancestors had extensive access to country through work on Koolpinyah, Humpty Doo and Marrakai pastoral leases, as well as their involvement in the buffalo and crocodile industries. More recently Wulna presence has focused on Wairuk community located south of Fogg Dam.

The Wulna perspective of country includes all the resources, people, beliefs and cultural practices that link them to the land. The Traditional Owners regard themselves as “belonging to country”, and often state that “we look after country, so that country will look after us”. These attitudes and statements confirm that the land and the people are inseparable and all that happens on country has consequences for Traditional Owners. They have a strong desire and obligation to ensure that their country is managed properly and in accordance with traditional law.

The rights to hunt and gather for non-commercial and ceremonial purposes by Aboriginal people, who have traditional rights to country, are confirmed in section 122 of the TPWCA. Senior men and women still recall the range of foods collected from country, including long yams, water chestnuts, freshwater turtles, magpie geese, ducks, eggs, water pythons, file snakes, pigs, buffalo, agile wallabies, goannas, catfish, red-claw yabbies, saratoga and barramundi. These resources also include materials traditionally used to make practical items such as bags, baskets, mats and fish traps as well as sacred and ceremonial items. Many species of animal are sacred to Traditional Owners as totemic species, and the exchange and sharing of traditional foods is a cultural obligation.

The Wulna people are also concerned that other Aboriginal people should follow proper cultural protocols when accessing and utilising the resources of country. Traditional Owners may need to remind family members about their obligations by promoting cultural protocols and appropriate behaviour.

*Traditional Owners still hunt magpie geese in the Reserves (Photo: Tourism NT)*



### 3.3 Engaging the Community

#### 3.3.1 Community and Stakeholder Engagement

The partners value the involvement of the community, especially neighbours, tourist operators, hunters and the Friends of Fogg Dam. Their involvement enhances visitor experiences and operational effectiveness within the Reserves.

The joint management partners are very fortunate to have the active support of the Friends of Fogg Dam. Established in 2006, the group aims to promote, protect and enhance the Dam's values and help visitors to enjoy, understand and appreciate them. Volunteers from the group have been instrumental in the maintenance and promotion of the Reserve through working bees, field days, weed control, as well as visitor monitoring. They have also been successful in accessing resources that are not otherwise readily available to the partners. The partners greatly value the work and efforts of the Friends of Fogg Dam and want to continue the strong and effective relationship.

The Reserves are situated in a relatively rapidly growing horticultural and rural residential area, and neighbours face many land management challenges in common, such as weeds and wildfire. The fragmented nature of the Reserves means that maintaining relationships with the community and collaborating with neighbours is especially important.



*Field day at Fogg Dam (Photo: Friends of Fogg Dam).*

### 3.3.2 Community Education and Interpretation

***“The kids are losing all that knowledge... old people need to get back on country and share stories with other people – young kids, parks, everyone” The Wulna People***

Fogg Dam provides an important resource for community education, with many schools visiting the Reserve to learn about the values of wetlands. The Rangers offer guided walks and talks at Fogg Dam, and there are opportunities to expand this seasonal program to include presentations by Traditional Owners giving a cultural perspective on the Reserves.

The Traditional Owners wish to maintain a strong culture by transferring knowledge to younger generations. They are also particularly keen to share knowledge with visitors and the community to increase the understanding and appreciation of the cultural significance of Wulna country. The partners believe this is an important way to provide the richer and more personal experience sought by many international tourists and domestic visitors.

The presentations, interpretation and education offered at the Reserves should enrich a visitor’s total experience of the Top End. The Reserves are rich in biodiversity and are a place where traditional Aboriginal stories continue to bind its Traditional Owners to the land. The Reserves can be presented as a place of re-connection and reconciliation. There is also potential for greater utilisation of Fogg Dam for community education as well as sharing knowledge from research undertaken in the Reserves by Australian and international universities over many years.

All interpretation should be planned, and logically consistent to best present the unique assets of the Reserves. Further, emphasis needs to be placed on genuine engagement between the visitor and the Reserves which builds a sense of personal connection.

***“It’s important that younger generation get our knowledge...they’ll be making the decisions one day” The Wulna People***



*Fogg Dam is an important resource for community education (Photo: Michael Barritt)*



**Objective:**

- Visitors enjoy safe, high quality and informative experiences, and satisfaction with their visit is high (at least 90%).

**Management Directions:**

**Access and Facilities**

- Fogg Dam will be showcased through thoughtful planning and design to establish a complementary suite of experiences consistent with its vision and unique values.
- Existing visitor facilities, including walking tracks, viewing platforms, day-use areas and interpretive signage, will be maintained to a high standard.
- In addition to further priorities identified through tourism planning processes, the partners will consider :
  - providing safe pedestrian access along the Fogg Dam wall;
  - changing the signage on the Arnhem Highway to clearly highlight Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve and visitor activities;
  - reviewing the needs, standards and quality of existing facilities and infrastructure;
  - maintaining the structural integrity of the dam wall at Fogg Dam;
  - managing traffic on the Fogg Dam wall;
  - dispersing visitor pressure on Fogg Dam by developing other areas; and
  - introducing surveillance cameras, expanding patrols or using other means to encourage compliance at Fogg Dam.
- Entry of pets will be consistent with the Parks and Wildlife Commission Pets in Parks Policy.

**Future Opportunities**

- Sustainable commercial cultural and nature-based tourism will be fostered. The partners will work with industry to explore and identify sustainable tourism development and investment opportunities through a well-considered planning process.
- Planning and ongoing business support for commercial development will be assisted by Tourism NT, Department of Business, tourism industry representatives and potential commercial partners.
- To better promote the Reserves and potentially develop more tourism activities the partners will be proactive in working with the tourism industry through established forums and organisations such as Tourism Top End and Tourism NT. Tourism and commercial development will remain a standing item at Joint Management Committee meetings.

**Hunting**

- Recreational hunting will be fostered at Harrison Dam and Lambell's Lagoon and the partners will collaborate with Top End hunting groups to promote sustainable practices and manage wetland habitats.
- In collaboration with hunters and the local community, new buffer zones and new hunting areas in the broader region will be considered if deemed necessary.
- Park Rangers, Wildlife Management Officers, NT Police and hunting associations will collaborate to strengthen compliance and ensure sustainable use of the Reserves.

**Visitor Safety**

- The Emergency Response Plan will be reviewed annually. Identified risks will be rectified on a priority basis and Rangers will receive appropriate training.
- Crocodile traps will continue to be maintained throughout the year at Harrison Dam and a saltwater crocodile management plan will be prepared for the Reserve.
- Tour operators will be encouraged to report incidents and safety issues to park management.

#### **Continuing Connections to Country**

- Rights in relation to hunting and gathering from the Reserves will extend to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people.
- The Reserves, or areas within them, may be temporarily closed to the public for flood or operational requirements and important Aboriginal ceremonies. Any closures will be advertised and involve communication with the tourism industry.

#### **Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

- The joint management partners will work with people who have an interest in the Reserves. Involving the community will enhance the values, visitor opportunities and enjoyment of the Reserves. The joint management partners will keep the stakeholders informed about significant issues and proposed developments.
- The joint management partners will actively encourage volunteers and community groups, such as Friends of Fogg Dam, and the Field and Game Association of the NT, to become involved in programs within the Reserves, including education, interpretation, monitoring and maintenance tasks. Public events and programs for the enjoyment of the community will also be encouraged.
- The joint management partners will develop strategies to coordinate and direct all interpretation and community education to best present the unique assets of the Reserves. The strategies will be prepared with Traditional Owners to ensure that all Aboriginal cultural information shared with visitors is accurate and appropriate.

## **4. Protecting the Values**

### **4.1 Understanding the Values**

The wetlands of the Adelaide River Conservation Reserves are spectacular landscapes that characterise the coastal areas of the Top End.

Many traditional Aboriginal dreaming trails traverse the Conservation Reserves and retain highly significant cultural values for Traditional Owners. The Adelaide River Coastal Floodplain is a site of international conservation significance (Harrison et al 2009) and approximately four percent of this floodplain is protected by the Reserves. The Reserves comprise largely intact wetland ecosystems and include vegetation and faunal communities representative of typical Top End wetlands. They include seasonally inundated floodplains and swamps, lagoons and billabongs, melaleuca swamps and saline coastal floodplains. These wetland habitats are also identified as being of national significance, and are listed in the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia (DIWA).

The joint management partners share a responsibility to maintain the cultural heritage of the Reserves and protect the values for future generations. The recent history of the area associated with World War II, and that of the pastoral, buffalo, crocodile and agricultural industries is shared by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

#### **4.1.1 Fauna**

Among the 308 vertebrate species recorded from the Adelaide River Conservation Reserves there are six threatened species (see Appendix 2): northern quoll (*Dasyurus hallucatus*), yellow chat (*Epthianura crocea tunneyi*), Gouldian finch (*Erythrura gouldiae*), yellow-spotted monitor

(*Varanus panoptes*), Mertens' water monitor (*Varanus mertensi*), and the Australian bustard (*Ardeotis australis*). The northern quoll and the two monitors are most threatened by poisoning from cane toads. There are very few records of Gouldian finch and yellow chat from the Reserves, which do not contain core habitat for these species.

Fogg and Harrison Dams form the largest permanent freshwater bodies in the Adelaide River catchment and provide important year-round habitat for water birds and other aquatic fauna and flora. Many migratory bird species listed in international treaties with the governments of China (CAMBA) and Japan (JAMBA) and the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention) also use these wetlands. Large areas of the Reserves lie within the Adelaide and Mary River Floodplains Important Bird Area, recognised for the vast numbers of waterbirds, including globally important populations.

The Adelaide River floodplain reliably provides some of the best nesting habitat in the Northern Territory for magpie geese (Bayliss and Yeomans 1990). While most of the significant nesting areas occur outside the boundaries, the Reserves provide essential Dry season habitat for the geese. Melacca Swamp contains some of the best on-park breeding sites for saltwater crocodiles recorded in the Top End and is one of the highest density breeding areas for this species (Wildlife Management International 2007).

Some areas within the Reserves, particularly Fogg and Harrison Dams, are long-term biological research sites. Researchers from Sydney University maintain a Tropical Ecology Research Centre at Middle Point, where work has focused on the remarkably dense biomass of pythons and associated prey, including various species of rats. The recorded biomass (combined weight) of predator (water python *Liasis fuscus*) and prey (dusky rat *Rattus colletti*) species on the Fogg Dam floodplain is the highest in the world (Madsen *et al* 2006). More recently research has turned to the challenges posed by the arrival of cane toads (*Rhinella marina*) in such an environment.



Sunset at Fogg Dam (Photo: Tourism NT)

#### 4.1.2 Flora

The Reserves support patches of wet, spring-fed and dry monsoon rainforest which are floristically and structurally distinct from the surrounding savannah woodland and floodplain vegetation, and have high conservation value as habitat. In the Top End, monsoon rainforests are widespread, highly fragmented, and vulnerable to degradation by feral animals, inappropriate fire regimes, water extraction, and weeds. They are also dependent on highly mobile fauna species, particularly fruit-eating birds and flying foxes, for dispersal of plant seeds and maintenance of diversity. Workshop Jungle at Fogg Dam, containing both wet and dry monsoon

rainforest, is one of the best known and most comprehensively described rainforests in the NT. It provides an important scientific, interpretational and educational resource.

The Reserves support 449 recorded plant species, including three threatened species, a cycad, a palm and an orchid. *Cycas armstrongii*, a threatened cycad endemic to the NT, is listed as vulnerable; it occurs in woodland areas in the Reserves and can be locally abundant. Management for this species should focus on control of gamba and mission grasses and fire management (Liddle 2009).

Black Jungle rainforest supports three populations (of only eight recorded in the NT), of the endangered Darwin palm *Ptychosperma macarthurii*. Black Jungle rainforest also supports one of the two known populations (on the mainland NT) of the vulnerable arboreal orchid *Luisia teretifolia*. This species is cryptic and extremely difficult to find. Management for these rainforest species should aim to reduce risks of frequent and/or intense fire, and feral animals (Liddle *et al* 2006). Invasive grasses, which can increase fire impacts, should also be controlled. Permanent vegetation plots have been established in Black Jungle for monitoring rainforest condition and populations of the Darwin palm.

Two species of Australian native wild rice, (*Oryza rufipogon* and *O. meridionalis*) occur on floodplains within the Reserves and are the subject of research investigating their ecology, food properties and conservation requirements.

### **4.1.3 Sites of Significance for Aboriginal People**

The Adelaide River floodplain is traversed with pathways of ancestral spiritual beings and their tangible form is present in sacred sites throughout the Reserves. These pathways and sites are part of 'dreamings' which belong to Wulna. The knowledge associated with these 'dreamings' and sites has many functions in Aboriginal culture, including codifying the traditional law which governs how people relate to country, and the rules for caring for country. The 'dreamings' include Travelling Women, Long-necked Turtle, and Dog Dreaming. Areas within Black Jungle are also associated with men's business.

For Traditional Owners, knowledge of sacred sites gives them authority under traditional law, and is one of the most important ways they confirm and maintain their rights to country. For this reason they are concerned that these sites, and the knowledge associated with them, are properly managed.

Protection for sacred sites is afforded under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* (NTASSA). Under the NTASSA any entry to, works on, or use of, sacred sites is illegal unless in accord with conditions of an Authority Certificate issued by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA).

Seven sacred sites have been documented and registered by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority in the Adelaide River Conservation Reserves. A further eight sites are registered in the vicinity of the Reserves, and many more have been recorded. These sites and places have spiritual, mythological and ritual significance to Traditional Owners, and encompass knowledge and cultural practices exercised in managing them. Some of this knowledge is open and can be communicated widely, but other knowledge is sacred and can only be passed on to those with appropriate authority. Protocols relating to sites, stories and information of cultural significance should be established and communicated between the partners.

Most of the sacred sites in this area are not easily accessible to the public and are not directly affected by park operations. However, some sites are vulnerable, and Traditional Owners would like to see appropriate protective measures developed, as well as education to encourage an understanding of the cultural significance of sites and the importance of compliance with any relevant laws and policies. One site, known as "White Stone", is particularly vulnerable. If more

sections of the Reserves are opened for visitor access, it may be necessary to reassess management of other sites.

Archaeological sites associated with Aboriginal culture, including burial sites, shell middens and artefact scatters, also exist in the Reserves. Some of these sites are also registered and recorded with the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority as significant to Aboriginal people. Archaeological places and objects in the Northern Territory are protected under the *Heritage Act*. Sacred sites registered with the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority are also protected under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*.

#### 4.1.4 Indigenous Knowledge

One of the key actions to fulfil the principles of joint management is to incorporate traditional knowledge and land management practices into management programs. The best way to do this is to ensure that Traditional Owners are involved in developing operational plans and implementing management programs. Spending time together on country and sharing knowledge are also important ways for the partners to learn from each other and to incorporate traditional knowledge into management.

Intellectual property rights and Aboriginal cultural knowledge need to be appropriately recognised and acknowledged, and the recording, presentation and transfer of traditional knowledge need to be managed in line with the wishes of Traditional Owners. Traditional Owners sometimes provide information to researchers, and their contribution must be appropriately acknowledged, particularly in published works. Traditional Owners may expect to share in any benefit if this knowledge is used for commercial purposes. The NLC may assist the Traditional Owners in managing their traditional knowledge and negotiating terms of benefit sharing. Programs aimed at collecting cultural information to assist operational management, and for the benefit of future generations of Traditional Owners, may also be undertaken. Information gained during these programs remains the property of Wulna Traditional Owners.



*Traditional Owners and Rangers discussing the management of the Reserves (Photo: Pam Wickham)*

#### 4.1.5 Sustainable Harvest

Permits are issued to allow hunting of magpie geese and some duck species in Harrison Dam and Lambell's Lagoon during the declared waterfowl season, and the collection of crocodile eggs for commercial purposes within Melacca Swamp and Harrison Dam.

Permits are managed in accordance with the provisions of the *TPWC Act* and the *Sustainable Use of Wildlife Policy*, as well as individual species management programs such as the Saltwater Crocodile Management Program (Leach *et al* 2009) and Magpie Goose Management Program 2009-2014 (Delaney *et al* 2009). Surveys and long-term monitoring data on populations, nests and habitat condition are used to support decisions, and the regulations, policy and management programs are designed to ensure that these activities do not detrimentally affect the long-term survival of species.

Permits for the collection of crocodile eggs are issued under a competitive tendering process once the annual sustainable harvest level has been determined. The Joint Management



Committee is responsible for recommending the successful permit applicant and can negotiate employment and training opportunities for Traditional Owners as part of the licence agreement. Traditional Owners benefit directly from royalties paid for this activity.

Aboriginal traditional harvest of flora and fauna resources is permitted within the Reserves under section 122 of the *TPWC Act*. Harvest activity is seasonal and guided by traditional cultural protocols.

#### 4.1.6 Recent Historic Values

The recent history of the Adelaide River area is shared by Indigenous and non- Indigenous peoples and is part of the story of the development of Northern Australia. Associations between Wulna people and European settlers began with trading in 1846 at the Escape Cliffs settlement on the nearby Cape Hotham. The establishment and expansion of the buffalo industry on the floodplains developed an economic activity where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people worked together.

For Traditional Owners, the history of use and development of this area has had a profound effect on their culture and lifestyle. Current Wulna Traditional Owners and their extended families, together with the families of other groups with whom they share cultural connections, have participated alongside settlers, developers and Government agencies in the development and use of this area since European colonisation.

#### 4.1.7 World War II

A number of artefacts associated with the defence of Australia's northern coastline during World War II are found within and around the Adelaide River Conservation Reserves. These sites are recorded, although a full assessment of their heritage significance and conservation requirements has not been completed. They include:

- the wreck of a spitfire aircraft involved in a mid-air collision during practice exercises in 1944, which is located along Hollands Creek in Black Jungle.
- the remains of Camp Liberton, occupied by a detachment of the 2/1 Australian Forestry Company, Royal Australian Engineers, between August and December 1944; these are located near the edge of Black Jungle Swamp. There is also a timber mill associated with this camp.



*Remains of Camp Liberton, occupied by a detachment of the 2/1 Australian Forestry Company, Royal Australian Engineers 1944*

### 4.1.8 Humpty Doo Rice Growing Project

After World War II, CSIRO developed an area on the Adelaide River floodplain for experimental rice growing, called the Humpty Doo Rice Project. Fogg and Harrison Dams were constructed to store water as part of the project. By the time the rice-growing scheme folded in 1963, the expanse of water impounded by the two dams had already become a Dry season refuge for wildlife, particularly waterbirds.

The remains of the infrastructure at Fogg and Harrison Dams include channels and contour mounds, the rice bulk bin and several pump stations, including the main pump and lock used to pump water from the Adelaide River into Harrison Dam. Clearance is required under the *Heritage Act* for any proposed disturbance to these sites.

With grant funding, the Friends of Fogg Dam developed interpretive material for a Humpty Doo Rice Trail, enabling visitors to take a historic journey from Darwin to Adelaide River identifying locations and relics of the Project along the way.

## 4.2 Managing the Threats

Weeds, feral animals and inappropriate fire regimes all directly threaten biodiversity. The fragmented nature of the Reserves, the surrounding land use and proximity to Darwin all increase the vulnerability of the Reserves to these threats, as well as other less obvious ones such as encroaching development, saltwater intrusion, water extraction and poaching of protected species.

### 4.2.1 Weeds

Weeds represent a major threat to the biodiversity of the Reserves and, if left unmanaged, have the potential to significantly alter the structure and function of existing habitats. The Parks and Wildlife Commission has a legislative responsibility under the *Weeds Management Act* (NT) to control the spread of declared weeds and, in some cases, eradicate them from the Reserves. All attempts must be made to eradicate Class A weeds, and Class B weeds must be contained and controlled. Some species are also recognised nationally as Weeds of National Significance (WONS), and must be managed accordingly. Weed management in the Reserves focuses on general weed control around visitor nodes and main roads, and control of the Class A and B weeds identified below:

- Mimosa (*Mimosa pigra*: B, WONS) – a woody weed that forms dense impenetrable thickets on floodplains, displacing native vegetation and fauna. Mimosa occurs on large areas of the Black Jungle floodplain. Dense thickets are found on land bordering the Reserve and this provides a seed source for re-infestation. The Black Jungle floodplain is a priority area for control of Mimosa, and other Reserves will be monitored for new infestations.
- Para grass (*Urochloa mutica*: B, WONS) and olive hymenachne (*Hymenachne amplexicaulis*: B, WONS) – both exclude native species and reduce wetland habitat diversity, and both have the potential to colonise all areas of freshwater floodplain. They occur in scattered populations throughout the Reserves, are difficult to control, and are spreading. Olive hymenachne is a priority species for control in Fogg Dam and Harrison Dam and is being managed through collaborative projects with both Friends of Fogg Dam and the Field and Game Association NT.
- Gamba grass (*Andropogon gayanus*: B) and mission grass (*Pennisetum polystachion*: B) – these species occur mostly in woodland areas of the Reserves, particularly along

boundaries and fire breaks. They crowd out native plants and significantly increase fire fuel loads, contributing to intense Dry season fires that are difficult to control. Control of these grasses is a priority for all Reserves.

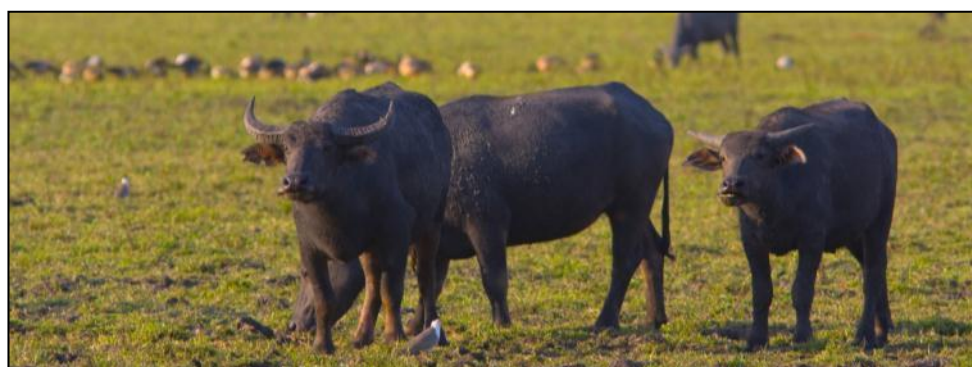
- Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*: A) - was first detected at Fogg Dam in the 1970s and forms dense impenetrable mats over the water surface. All instances of this weed in the Northern Territory have been eradicated. On-going surveillance of Fogg Dam for the re-invasion of this weed remains a priority.

#### 4.2.2 Feral Animals

Feral animals can have a major impact on the natural values of the Reserves. They can cause erosion of fragile soils, spread weeds and exotic diseases, prey on native species and compete with them for food and habitat. There have been 16 exotic animal species recorded within the Reserves and the most problematic ones are:

- Pigs (*Sus scrofa*) - favour the moist conditions and dense protective cover found in monsoon rainforests. However, they also exploit seasonal food resources on the floodplains, including waterlily roots and *Eleocharis* corms. The disturbed areas that result from their foraging are particularly vulnerable to weed invasion and erosion. Permits are issued for the hunting of pigs in Harrison Dam year round.
- Buffalo (*Bubalis bubalis*) – trample sensitive vegetation, stir up billabongs and create swim channels which allow saline water to penetrate freshwater wetlands. Buffalo do not occur in large numbers, although they are increasing in Melacca Swamp and could damage the crocodile nesting habitat.

Minor numbers of pigs and buffalo occur in all the Reserves and stray cattle are also a problem, particularly in Black Jungle and Melacca Swamp. Fencing, fence maintenance, mustering and targeted shooting at Melacca Swamp will occur in cooperation with neighbors. However, urban expansion and intensification of land use in areas surrounding Fogg and Harrison Dams and Black Jungle, mean that control of feral animals by shooting or baiting is difficult. Feral animal control in these areas is currently opportunistic and fences maintained through periodic and annual programs. The introduced species, Siamese fighting fish (*Betta splendens*) was found in Fogg Dam and other wetlands along the Adelaide River in 2014. The threat posed by the species to the Reserve's wetlands is unknown.



*Buffalo can trample sensitive vegetation and stir up billabongs (Photo: Tourism NT)*

#### 4.2.3 Fire

Intense wildfires in the Dry season, fuelled by large stands of gamba and mission grass, are capable of killing mature savannah trees and penetrating the margins of monsoon rainforest, increasing susceptibility to further weed invasion and erosion. Over time this can lead to significant loss in the diversity of flora and fauna associated with savannah, rainforest and riparian communities.

Effective fire management is a critical requirement, as three of the four Reserves are in the rural



area of Darwin. Operational fire management priorities should focus on the protection of life, assets and biodiversity. Approaches will include the maintenance of fire breaks and patchy fuel reduction burns carried out early in the Dry season.

#### **4.2.4 Groundwater Extraction**

In recent decades there has been an escalation in the extraction of groundwater from aquifers in the Darwin rural area leading to concern about the conservation of spring-fed rainforests, including Black Jungle.

A water allocation plan is currently being developed for the Howard East region by the Department of Land Resource Management. This region extends east to the Adelaide River and includes the Adelaide River Conservation Reserves. The water allocation plan will guide management of the groundwater resources, including that of the Koolpinyah Dolomite aquifer, the main aquifer within the region. It will consider stakeholder water uses and the needs of the environment, and ensure appropriate water sharing arrangements are made.

Maintenance of groundwater-dependent ecosystems, such as spring-fed monsoon rainforests, is a key goal of the water allocation plan. Department of Land and Resource Management staff currently monitor a number of bores within the water planning area, as well as permanent floristic sites within Black Jungle. Data from these sites can be used to help determine the impact of water extraction levels on rainforest health.

#### **4.2.5 Saltwater Intrusion**

Saltwater intrusion is occurring along natural and man-made levees at Fogg and Harrison Dams and Melacca Swamp. It has the potential to destroy both crocodile breeding grounds and magpie goose habitat, and reduce wetland diversity by replacing freshwater species with salt tolerant species. Levees constructed for irrigation at Harrison Dam are deteriorating and accelerating the drainage of freshwater from the floodplain after the Wet season. Saltwater intrusion is likely to increase as climate change begins to take effect and sea level rises.

#### **4.2.6 Aquatic Vegetation**

Due to nutrient run-off the open water areas of Fogg and Harrison Dams are threatened by vegetation growth, which affects waterbird habitat and tourist features. Leppitt (2010) suggests that the entire surface of Fogg Dam is likely to become covered in aquatic vegetation in the near future. Sections of Fogg Dam have been dredged to remove aquatic vegetation and sediment in recent years. However the depth of any pond dredging is limited as anaerobic mangrove swamp soils exist only several feet below the soil surface and cannot be disturbed.

Leppitt and Franklin (2012) suggest that the optimal strategy to maintain open water habitat will require a combination of disturbances and an adaptive management regime. The Friends of Fogg Dam have also raised the idea of constructing ponds of various depths on the downstream side of the dam wall to create a range of different habitats. Reinstatement of a sluice gate underneath the causeway at Fogg Dam has been identified as a priority to help drain the upper part of the dam.

#### **4.2.7 Intensification of Surrounding Land Use**

Three of the four Reserves are located in the rural urban fringe of Darwin. Intensification of land use, associated with the growth of the rural area, is occurring, and causing additional management issues for the Reserves. Land clearing in surrounding areas is also contributing to

silting up of Fogg and Harrison Dams and Lambell's Lagoon, and there is also high inflow of nutrients into these wetland areas as a result of runoff from surrounding properties.



*The open water areas of Fogg and Harrison Dams are threatened by growth of aquatic vegetation. Sections of Fogg Dam have been cleared to remove aquatic vegetation*

**Objectives:**

- Traditional Owners are actively involved in cultural heritage management.
- Wetland and rainforest habitats and the associated diversity and aggregations of fauna and flora are retained and enhanced.
- Cultural and historical sites are protected and interpretive signage added where appropriate.
- Indigenous knowledge is incorporated into Reserve management and promoted in operational programs.
- Indigenous traditional and intellectual property is protected.

**Management Directions:**

**Biodiversity**

- Park Rangers will record species of interest seen in the Reserves on a database to increase biodiversity data for the Park.
- Community and research groups will be encouraged to participate in a waterbird monitoring program at Fogg Dam to help determine the success of vegetation and water management.
- Management of fire, weeds and feral animals will be a priority to help protect rainforest integrity.
- Periodic surveys of Darwin palm, *Ptychosperma macarthurii*, and the orchid, *Luisia teretifolia*, in Black Jungle will be supported.

**Sites of Significance for Aboriginal people**

- The Parks and Wildlife Commission will respect Traditional Owners' advice relating to cultural matters and customary obligations, including ceremonial activity and their need to access country.
- For matters that potentially affect any sacred sites, the partners will consult with senior Traditional Owners responsible for the sites. Traditional Owners will develop guidelines to clarify issues around public access to culturally sensitive areas and associated knowledge.
- Designation of culturally sensitive areas as Special Protection Zones will be considered as required.
- Adequate public notice will be given where public access is affected by ceremonial activity.

**Indigenous Knowledge**

- Indigenous knowledge and land management practices will be recorded and promoted, and incorporated into operational programs where appropriate.
- On-country activities and local cross-cultural education will be supported to promote the transfer of knowledge and skills between Traditional Owners, younger generations and Rangers.
- Traditional Owners will retain ownership and control of their intellectual property rights consistent with policy and guidelines agreed between the partners and the NLC.

### **Sustainable Harvest**

- Protocols and policy will be developed as needed, to ensure hunting and gathering is consistent with visitor safety and Reserve values.

### **Historical Values**

- The partners will develop a cultural heritage management plan for both Aboriginal and European cultural heritage management in the Reserves. Advice will be sought from NT Heritage Officers regarding the most appropriate protection and conservation works. Any cultural heritage management plan will consider significance to Traditional Owners.

### **Weeds**

- A weed action plan will be developed and implemented each year. The priority weeds for floodplain areas of the Reserves are mimosa, olive hymenachne, and para grass, and those for woodland areas are snake weed, gamba and mission grasses. These species will be managed on a catchment basis within the Reserves and as per the annual weeds program.
- The priority areas for weeds control will be around visitor nodes, and along main roads and tracks within the Reserves.
- There will be ongoing surveillance of Fogg Dam for re-invasion of water hyacinth, and more broadly across the Reserve for new infestations of existing or new weed species.
- Weed location data will be collected and mapped using GIS to monitor weed distribution and the effectiveness of weed control.
- Best practice quarantine procedures will be used to reduce the spread of weeds through the Reserves.

### **Feral Animals**

- A feral animal action plan will be developed and implemented each year with pigs, buffalo and stray cattle being the target species for management in all Reserves.
- Mustering and targeted shooting of feral animals will occur in cooperation with neighbours.
- Fences within the Reserves will be maintained through annual and periodic programs and replaced over time.
- Replacement of the boundary fence between Melacca Swamp and Koolpinyah Station is a high priority and external funds may be sought.
- Recreational hunting to control pigs will continue to occur in the Reserves.
- Parks staff will liaise with relevant agencies and support efforts to monitor environmental impacts of Siamese fighting fish, and address them if necessary.

### **Fire**

- A fire management action plan will be developed and implemented with the priority of management being protection of (1) life, (2) infrastructure and (3) maintenance of biodiversity values.
- Strategic firebreaks will be maintained and fire fuel loads managed in all Reserves.
- Indigenous knowledge and skills will be incorporated into fire management programs as appropriate.

### **Groundwater Extraction**

- Parks staff will provide input into the development of the Howard East Water Allocation Plan.
- Ongoing monitoring of rainforest plots and groundwater in the Reserves by the Department of Land Resource Management will be supported.

### **Saltwater Intrusion**

- Existing levees at Fogg and Harrison Dams and Melacca Swamp will be maintained to reduce the occurrence of saltwater intrusion.

### **Removal of Aquatic Vegetation**

- Removal of aquatic vegetation to maintain waterbird habitat at Fogg Dam will be considered, taking into account likely effectiveness, environmental impact, cost and the temporary reduction in tourism value.

## 5. Managing Operations

### 5.1 Management, Resources and Operations for Joint Management

Management operations are currently carried out by Park Rangers based near Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve with regular patrols to Harrison Dam and Black Jungle/ Lambell's Lagoon Conservation Reserves and Melacca Swamp Conservation Area. At present, most funding to manage the Reserves is provided by Northern Territory Government to manage the Northern Territory's Park estate. Major works and ongoing programs are subject to Territory-wide Government priorities and public tenders under procurement directives.

The Reserves also earn income from an annual tender let for the harvest of saltwater crocodile eggs. This income is shared evenly between the Traditional Owners and the Reserves. The partners need to decide how these funds should be spent as part of budgetary planning, and need to ensure effective allocation of funding across Park management and infrastructure requirements. The partners will also look to diversifying funding sources for special and general projects that cannot be funded under the annual Park budget.

The joint management partners have an obligation to protect the natural and cultural values of the Reserves. Effective use of resources hinges on integrated operational planning. Annual fire, weed and feral animal control programs are based on protecting Reserve values, risk minimisation and long-term strategies. Co-ordination and integration of plans is essential to maximise resource use and effectiveness. Both partners have a role to play in planning and review of annual operational plans and management programs.

### 5.2 Permits

Permits issued under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws* are required for activities that involve special access, hunting, use of any part of the Reserves for commercial purposes or various other uncommon activities.

The Joint Management Committee will be responsible for developing practical guidelines for permits. The guidelines must consider the interests of stakeholders, the wider community and existing policy. Until agreed guidelines are developed by the joint management partners, the NLC and Parks and Wildlife Commission will consult with Traditional Owners on permit applications that request any access or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors.

### 5.3 Regulating Activities

**Licences or sub-leases** – Such agreements may be entered into where a secure form of land tenure is needed, or for long-term security for commercial proponents. Any licence or sub-lease entered into by the Northern Territory Government in respect of the Reserves must be consistent with the terms of the relevant ILUA and must have the informed consent of Traditional Owners.

With the consent of affected Traditional Owners, the ILUA and this Plan together allow the partners to enter into benefit-sharing arrangements for commercial operations and developments within the Park.

**Development Proposals** – All development proposals will be considered by the partners. Any proposal must be consistent with any applicable laws, the appropriate ILUA and any other relevant legislation. They will be subject to assessment to ensure there will be no negative impact on reserved values and meet Parks and Wildlife Commission policies. Developments may also be subject to assessment under the relevant legislation such as the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*, *Heritage Act*, *Environmental Assessment Act* and *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwlth)*.

A proposed service and road corridor is identified in the western portion of Black Jungle Conservation Reserve. Under the NT Planning Scheme the alignment of this corridor is fixed; however, advice from DLPE is that it is unlikely to be developed within the next ten years.

**Areas for community living** – Traditional Owners have expressed their interest in developing an area for community living near the Reserves to enable them to engage in business and cultural activities.

**Proposals for expansion of the Reserves** – Adjacent to Lambell’s Lagoon Conservation Reserve are Crown lands managed by Parks and Wildlife Commission that have yet to be officially declared as Section 12 parks under the *TPWC Act* (NT Portions 4419, part of 4732 and Sections 1605, 1730, 1731). These areas may be subject to Park declaration and this Plan will apply.

**Dealing with proposals not in the Plan** – Proposals not addressed in the Plan will be considered by the partners through the Joint Management Committee.

## 5.4 Mining and Extraction

Given the relatively small size of the Reserves, mining and extractive activities have the potential to damage their natural, cultural and tourism values. Northern Territory legislation allows for mining in parks and reserves, but requires the Minister for Mines to consider the views of the joint management partners prior to granting any mining interest. If a mining interest is granted, the Minister for Mines is obliged to consider conditions for the protection of the environment recommended by the partners.

Under the *Mineral Titles Act*, the entire areas of Melacca Swamp, Fogg and Harrison Dams, and Lambell’s Lagoon are identified as Reserved Land (RL1124 and RL365) and not used for mining purposes. The partners are keen to see that the existing mining reservations stay in place.

A gravel pit is located on the south-west boundary of Fogg Dam and has been used for the maintenance of roads within Fogg Dam. The pit is nearly exhausted and the partners wish that no further extraction take place. Options to open new gravel pits within the Reserve are limited and alternative sources of gravel will need to be found for any new major works.

## 5.5 Research, Survey and Monitoring

Sydney University has conducted valuable research and monitoring programs in the Reserves over several years. Long term research of crocodile nesting carried out by Wildlife Management International also continues at Melacca Swamp Conservation Area. Traditional Owners have knowledge of the Reserves that may contribute to research outcomes. It is important that Traditional Owners are consulted about, and invited to participate in, research, survey and monitoring projects, and where possible, employed in this work when economically viable.

Information about the Reserves values, environmental trends and the effectiveness of management actions assists decision-making. Data on visitor numbers, demographics, behaviour and satisfaction levels are crucial for tourism planning and visitor management.

**Objectives:**

- The Objectives and Management Directions in this Plan achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities.
- The Reserves' values are enhanced, and Traditional Owners and the wider community benefit from appropriate development and permitted activities.

**Management Directions:**

**Management, Resources and Operations for Joint Management**

- Operational programs will be developed annually based on the protection of key values, and include processes to monitor management effectiveness.
- The partners will explore alternative funding sources for special and general projects that cannot be funded under the annual budget.

**Permits, Development Proposals, Sub-leases, Expansion of the Reserves and Areas for Community Living**

- The Joint Management Committee will develop policies and guidelines for assessing permit applications that involve special access or activities. In the absence of these guidelines the NLC will consult with Traditional Owners over permit applications and advise the Parks and Wildlife Commission when applicable.
- Where proposed activities comply with the standard permit guidelines permits may be issued by the Parks and Wildlife Commission without consulting the Traditional Owners.
- The Parks and Wildlife Commission will consult with NLC if a permit proposal requests special access or activity outside the standard guidelines, may be in conflict with the wishes of Traditional owners, or may be part of a major commercial project.
- The potential impacts of any proposed activity or development will be considered in line with the Commercial Development Policy and assessed at a level commensurate with the scale of potential impact; they will also be consistent with the Commonwealth and Northern Territory legislation as appropriate.
- Proposals for living areas, sub-leases or expansion of the Reserves will be considered by the Joint Management Committee. The NLC will undertake Traditional Owner consultation. Living areas and sub-leases will be subject to environmental impact assessment, Departmental policies and locally developed guidelines as required.
- Potential sites for location of a community living area and/ or joint management shelter will be considered and constructed as external funds become available.
- This Plan will apply to NT Portions 4419, part of 4732 and Sections 1605, 1730, 1731, adjacent to Lambell's Lagoon Conservation Reserve, upon official declaration under the TPWC Act.

**Mining and Extraction**

- The partners will seek to retain the Reserved Lands (RL1124 and RL365) covering Melacca Swamp, Fogg and Harrison Dams, and Lambell's Lagoon. Extraction from the gravel pit located on the south-west boundary of Fogg Dam will be discontinued. Alternative gravel sources will need to be identified.

**Research, Survey and Monitoring**

- The partners will identify research, survey and monitoring priorities for the Reserves and encourage or engage other organisations to be involved.

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## 7. Appendices

### Appendix 1: Land parcels of Adelaide River Conservation Reserves

Site Name (area hectares)	NT Portion	Owner (tenure)	Acquisition	Declaration
Black Jungle/Lambell's Lagoon Conservation Reserve (4052 ha)	Sec 8 , Sec 1603	CLC (Freehold)	23/03/1986	Declared 19/01/11
Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve (1569 ha)	Sec 1554	CLC (SPL 552)	06/08/1982	Declared 07/11/2002 Re-declared 19/01/11
Fogg Dam extension (285 ha)	Sec 1596, Sec 1597	CLC (CLP 1496)	8/08/1994	Declared 19/01/11
Harrison Dam Conservation Reserve (3284 ha)	Sec 1574	CLC (Freehold)	31/01/1989	Declared 19/01/11
Melacca Swamp Conservation Area (2315 ha)	Sec 3, Sec 10	CLC (Freehold)	25/03/1986	Declared 19/01/11
Additional areas set aside for conservation	Sec 1605, Sec 1730, Sec 1731, NT Portion 4419 and southern portion of NT 4732 (Sec 1745 (A))	NTG (VC)		To be declared

CLC – Conservation Land Corporation; SPL –Special Purpose Lease; CLP – Crown Lease Perpetual; VC – Vacant Crown Land

### Appendix 2: Threatened Species

	Common name	Species name	NT status	EPBC Act
Plants	Darwin palm	<i>Ptychosperma macarthurii</i>	Endangered	Endangered
		<i>Luisia teretifolia</i>	Vulnerable	Not Listed
		<i>Cycas armstrongii</i>	Vulnerable	Not Listed
Birds	Yellow Chat (Alligator Rivers subspecies)	<i>Epthianura crocea tunneyi</i>	Endangered	Vulnerable
	Gouldian Finch	<i>Erythrura gouldiae</i>	Endangered	Endangered
	Australian Bustard	<i>Ardeotis australis</i>	Vulnerable	Not Listed
Reptiles	Floodplain Monitor	<i>Varanus panoptes</i>	Vulnerable	Not Listed
	Mertens' Water Monitor	<i>Varanus mertensi</i>	Vulnerable	Not Listed
Mammals	Northern Quoll	<i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i>	Critically Endangered	Endangered

# **Araluen Cultural Precinct Community Reference Group Terms of Reference**

## **Araluen Cultural Precinct**

The Araluen Cultural Precinct incorporates the Araluen Arts Centre (with four visual art galleries, a 500-seat proscenium arch theatre, a multi-purpose hall “Witchetty’s” and an outdoor performance space), Museum of Central Australia, Strehlow Research Centre, the Central Australian Aviation Museum, Central Craft, Yaye’s Café, Folk Cottage, Artist in Residence Space and encompasses several significant public works of art, a number of Aboriginal sacred sites and a range of heritage properties related to its aviation history.

The Precinct is home to some of the most significant artistic, cultural and historical experiences in Alice Springs and provides a unique visitor experience, encompassing Central Australia’s key cultural institutions and collections. The Araluen Arts Centre presents an annual program of exhibitions, theatre, and film, hosting iconic events such as the nationally significant Desert Mob.

## **Aims of the Precinct**

The Araluen Cultural Precinct aims to fulfil broad community aspirations across the arts, culture and history fields by creating an integrated visitor experience encompassing the region’s key cultural institutions and collections.

The Precinct aims to provide local, national and international visitors with opportunities to be informed, entertained and inspired, offering visitors a quality experience and ability to:

- Participate in and enjoy of all forms of the visual arts, crafts and performing arts;
- Learn about and experience the Central Australian region as a unique and fascinating part of the natural world;
- Journey through stories about people and places and the lives and times of the Region, in the wider context of Australian history;
- Learn about and experience Arrernte culture, including the unique landforms sacred to Arrernte people;
- See, learn about and experience Aboriginal art and Aboriginal cultural traditions in Central Australia; and
- Share in the local history of the Precinct within the wider story of Australian aviation history.

## **Role of the Reference Group**

The Community Reference Group will provide advice to the Minister for Tourism and Culture, via the division of Arts and Museums within the Department of Tourism and Culture, in regards to the ongoing development and strategic operation of the Araluen Cultural Precinct by:

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- Creating a dialogue between the Precinct's management and the community, providing an avenue for community input and feedback; and
- Assisting with implementation of the Araluen Cultural Precinct Development Plan.

### Community Reference Group Operation and Structure

Group meetings will be held up to 4 times a year and will be chaired by the Director, Araluen Cultural Precinct, in consultation and partnership with the Arts and Museums Division's Executive Director.

The Community Reference Group will consist of six community representatives, being people with a demonstrated commitment to the ongoing development of the Araluen Cultural Precinct.

Community representatives will have the ability to access wide community networks across a range of demographics, in order to provide balanced and representative advice, with specific knowledge in one or more of the following areas:

- Sponsorship and marketing;
- Young people and youth engagement strategies;
- The arts, including the visual and performing arts;
- Alice Springs as a tourism destination;
- Social and natural history;
- Aboriginal culture, history and traditions;
- Infrastructure development;
- Education and training.

Two of the six community representatives will be provided by the following bodies:

- The Alice Springs Town Council; and
- The Friends of Araluen.

These organisations will be asked to nominate representatives, and may also nominate proxies, should the nominated representative not be able to attend scheduled meetings.

The selection of community representatives and the appointment of nominated people for specified positions will be the decision of the Chief Executive, Department of Tourism and Culture.

Members of the Community Reference Group will generally be appointed for a two year term. Membership of the Community Reference Group is a non-remunerated position.

### **How to become a Community Reference Group member:**

A brief one page expression of interest for this position, accompanied by a CV, can be sent via post to:

Director  
Araluen Cultural Precinct  
PO Box 3521  
Alice Springs NT 0871

Or via email to: [araluen@nt.gov.au](mailto:araluen@nt.gov.au)

For further information telephone the Araluen Cultural Precinct on 8951 1120.

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**NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA****BARRANYI (NORTH ISLAND) LOCAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
REGULATIONS**

As in force at 7 November 2011

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**ENDNOTES**

# NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

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This reprint shows the Regulations as in force at 7 November 2011. Any amendments that commence after that date are not included.

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## BARRANYI (NORTH ISLAND) LOCAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REGULATIONS

### Regulations under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*

#### 1 Citation

These Regulations may be cited as the *Barranyi (North Island) Local Management Committee Regulations*.

#### 2 Interpretation

In these Regulations, unless the contrary intention appears:

***Barranyi Aboriginal Corporation*** means the Aboriginal association of that name incorporated under the *Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976* of the Commonwealth.

***Chairman*** means the Chairman of the Committee.

***Committee*** means the Barranyi (North Island) Local Management Committee established by regulation 3.

***member*** means a member of the Committee.

***Park*** means the area of land declared to be a park by the Administrator under section 12 of the Act, being all that parcel of land on North Island within the Sir Edward Pellew Group in the Northern Territory of Australia containing an area of 5421 hectares more or less, being Northern Territory Portion 3997 and being more particularly delineated on Survey Plan No. S90/316B, lodged with the Surveyor-General.

***relevant Aboriginals*** means:

- (a) the traditional Aboriginal owners of the Park;
- (b) Aboriginals entitled to enter on and use or occupy the Park in accordance with Aboriginal tradition, whether or not that entitlement is qualified as to place, time, circumstance, purpose, permission or by any other factor; and

- 
- (c) Aboriginals who are permitted by the Aboriginals referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) to enter on and use or occupy the Park.

### **3 Establishment of Committee**

There is established by these Regulations a committee to be known as the Barranyi (North Island) Local Management Committee.

### **4 Composition of Committee**

- (1) Subject to subregulation (2), the Committee shall consist of 10 members appointed by the Minister, of whom:
  - (a) 6 shall be persons appointed on the nomination of the Barranyi Aboriginal Corporation;
  - (b) 2 shall be employees within the meaning of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act*, and
  - (c) 2 shall be residents of Borroloola.
- (2) A person who is a member of the Legislative Assembly or of either House of the Parliament of the Commonwealth is not eligible to be appointed or to hold office as a member.
- (3) As soon as practicable after an appointment under subregulation (1) has been made, the Minister shall cause notice of the appointment to be published in the Gazette.
- (4) Subject to regulations 5 and 6, a member holds office for a period of 3 years but:
  - (a) is eligible for reappointment; and
  - (b) shall continue in office until reappointed or a successor is appointed.
- (5) Where a member appointed under subregulation (1)(a) is or is about to become unable, whether on account of illness or otherwise, to perform the duties of the member's office, the Barranyi Aboriginal Corporation may appoint a person to act in place of the member during the period the member is unable to perform the duties, unless the member has, under regulation 8(4), given to another member a general authority to vote for him or her at meetings of the Committee during the first-mentioned member's inability to perform his or her duties.
- (6) A person appointed to act in the place of a member has all the functions and powers of the member.

- 
- (7) The performance of a function or the exercise of a power of the Committee is not affected by reason only of there being a vacancy in the office of a member.

**5 Resignation of member**

A member may resign his or her office by writing, signed by or with the authority of the member, delivered to the Minister.

**6 Appointment of new member**

- (1) The Minister shall, as soon as practicable after:
- (a) receiving the resignation of a member;
  - (b) being advised in writing by the Barranyi Aboriginal Corporation that, in its opinion, a member appointed on its nomination has failed properly to perform the duties of the member's office; or
  - (c) becoming aware of a member's inability to continue as a member because of illness or for any other reason,
- terminate the appointment of the person as a member.

- (2) The Minister shall, as soon as practicable after:
- (a) becoming aware of the death of a member; or
  - (b) terminating the appointment of a person as a member under subregulation (1),

appoint another person, with the same qualification for membership as the person in whose place the person is appointed, to be a member.

**7 Chairman**

- (1) The Minister shall, as soon as practicable after the establishment of the Committee, or at any time when the office of Chairman is vacant, convene a meeting of the Committee for the purpose of electing a member as the Chairman.
- (2) The Minister shall appoint one of the members appointed under regulation 4(1)(a) to preside at a meeting referred to in subregulation (1).
- (3) The Chairman of the Committee shall be elected by the Committee from among the members appointed under regulation 4(1)(a).



- 
- (4) Where a member is elected as Chairman at a meeting referred to in subregulation (1), the member shall preside at the meeting in place of the member appointed under subregulation (2).
  - (5) Subject to subregulation (6), the Chairman holds office, provided he or she remains a member, for 3 years and is eligible for re-election.
  - (6) The Committee may at any time, by resolution, remove the Chairman from office and elect another member appointed under regulation 4(1)(a) as Chairman.

## **8 Calling of meetings, procedure, &c.**

- (1) The Chairman shall call such meetings of the Committee as are necessary for the performance of its functions and the exercise of its powers but, in any case, shall call not less than 2 meetings in each calendar year.
- (2) At any time:
  - (a) the Minister may direct; or
  - (b) not less than 3 members may request,the Chairman to call a meeting of the Committee and the Chairman shall call a meeting accordingly.
- (3) At a meeting of the Committee:
  - (a) the Chairman, if present, shall preside or, if the Chairman is not present, the members present shall elect one of their number to preside;
  - (b) subject to subregulation (4), 6 members, of whom 4 shall be members appointed under regulation 4(1)(a), constitute a quorum;
  - (c) questions arising shall be determined by a majority of the votes of the members present and, in the event of an equality of votes, the person presiding shall have a casting vote as well as a deliberative vote; and
  - (d) subject to these Regulations, the Committee shall determine the procedures to be followed at or in connection with the meeting.
- (4) A member may, in writing under the member's hand or with the member's authority, give to another member a general authority to vote for the first-mentioned member at a meeting of the Committee and the member given the authority may vote for the first-

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mentioned member at the meeting and shall, for the purposes of subregulation (3)(b), be counted towards a quorum as though he or she were also the first-mentioned member but the authorised member shall not vote on behalf of more than one member, and may be counted in place of one member only with the same qualification.

- (5) The Committee shall cause records of the Committee's meetings to be kept and, as soon as practicable after each meeting, shall cause a copy of the minutes of the meeting to be given to each member and to the Minister.
- (6) A member may require the Committee to admit to a meeting of the Committee such persons as the member considers necessary to advise the member on matters being considered at the meeting and may require the Committee to allow such persons, or any of them, to address the meeting on the member's behalf, and the Committee shall admit those persons and allow them to address the meeting accordingly.
- (7) A person admitted pursuant to subregulation (6) to a meeting of the Committee shall not vote on a matter at the meeting.

## **9 Functions and powers of Committee**

- (1) The Committee is, in the performance of its functions and the exercise of its powers, subject to the Act and the plan of management for the Park.
- (2) The functions of the Committee are:
  - (a) to assist the Commission in the preparation and assessment of the plan of management for the Park and of any subsequent amendments of the plan;
  - (b) to determine, for the purpose of providing guidance to the Commission, matters relating to the day to day management of the Park;
  - (c) to determine, in consultation with the Commission, the location of works and facilities in the Park;
  - (d) to assist the Commission in protecting the environment of the Park, and in particular, protecting sites and areas identified to the Committee by the Barranyi Aboriginal Corporation as being significant to Aboriginals in accordance with Aboriginal tradition;

- 
- (e) to nominate Aboriginals to assist the Commission in the selection of persons to be employed by the Commission in the Park;
  - (f) to protect the rights of relevant Aboriginals to occupy and use the Park;
  - (g) to encourage the maintenance of the Aboriginal tradition of relevant Aboriginals in the Park;
  - (h) to promote Aboriginal involvement in the administration and management of the Park;
  - U) to promote the traditional skills of Aboriginals in the management of the Park;
  - (k) to promote a knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, the traditional languages, culture, customs and skills of relevant Aboriginals;
  - (m) to make recommendations to the Commission relating to the content of educational or interpretive programs to be used in the Park;
  - (n) to make recommendations to the Commission relating to filming in the Park;
  - (p) to make recommendations to the Commission relating to staff training programs for persons employed by the Commission in the Park and in particular relating to the Aboriginal content of such programs;
  - (q) to make recommendations to the Commission relating to the use of the Park by the public and in particular relating to the granting of concessions and licences for tour operations and commercial enterprises;
  - (r) to make recommendations to the Commission relating to entry and other charges, if any, in the Park and the application of those charges;
  - (s) to seek reservations of land under Part 6, Division 1 of the *Mineral Titles Act* in respect of the Park;
  - (t) to make recommendations to the Commission relating to access by persons to areas within the Park;
  - (u) to make recommendations to the Commission relating to camping in the Park and the establishment of camping grounds, if any;

- 
- (w) to encourage Aboriginal business and commercial initiatives and enterprises in the Park;
  - (y) to make recommendations to the Commission relating to the employment by the Commission of relevant Aboriginals in the Park; and
  - (z) to make recommendations to the Commission relating to the expenditure of budgetary allocations in the Park.
- (3) The Committee has the power to do all things that are necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with, or incidental to the performance of, its functions.

**10 Members shall not disclose information**

A member shall not disclose information obtained in the course of the member's duties as a member unless the disclosure is made in the course of those duties.

**11 Publication of Regulations**

- (1) Section 57 of the *Interpretation Act* does not apply to these Regulations.
- (2) Copies of these Regulations shall be available for inspection by members of the public during office hours at the offices of the Commission.

## ENDNOTES

### 1 KEY

Key to abbreviations

<b>amd</b> =amended	<b>od</b> = order
<b>app</b> = appendix	<b>om</b> =omitted
<b>bl</b> = by-law	<b>pt</b> = Part
<b>ch</b> = Chapter	<b>r</b> = regulation/rule
<b>cl</b> = clause	<b>rem</b> = remainder
<b>div</b> = Division	<b>renum</b> = renumbered
<b>exp</b> =expires/expired	<b>rep</b> = repealed
<b>f</b> =forms	<b>s</b> = section
<b>Gaz</b> = <i>Gazette</i>	<b>sch</b> = Schedule
<b>hdg</b> =heading	<b>sdiv</b> = Subdivision
<b>ins</b> = inserted	<b>SL</b> = Subordinate Legislation
<b>lt</b> = long title	<b>sub</b> = substituted
<b>nc</b> = not commenced	

### 2 LIST OF LEGISLATION

#### ***Barranyi (North Island) Local Management Committee Regulations***

Notified	4 August 1992
Commenced	4 August 1992

#### ***statute Law Revision Act 2003 (Act No. 12, 2003)***

Assent date	18 March 2003
Commenced	18 March 2003

#### ***Mineral Titles (Consequential Amendments) Act 2010 (Act No. 37, 2010)***

Assent date	18 November 2010
Commenced	7 November 2011 ( <i>Gaz</i> G41, 12 October 2011, p 5)

### 3 LIST OF AMENDMENTS

r4	amd Act No. 12, 2003, s 19
r9	amd Act No. 37, 2010, s 14



Northern  
Territory  
Government

Attachment 9



# Chamber's Pillar Historical Reserve

Joint Management Plan October 2010



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## **Acknowledgements**

This Plan is the result of many hours of consultation and planning between the Traditional Owners of Chamber's Pillar Historical Reserve and Parks and Wildlife rangers, planning and joint management staff. Staff of the Central Land Council have assisted the joint management partners throughout and provided much valued input into the Plan's preparation.

**Note:** Italicised statements throughout this Plan are quotes of Traditional Owners made during the preparation of this Plan.

Chamber's Pillar Historical Reserve  
Joint Management Plan

Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory,  
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## Summary of this Plan

About 6500 intrepid visitors travel to the remote and beautiful Chamber's Pillar Historical Reserve each year, and are rewarded with a tranquil bush experience in a truly remarkable landscape. They are encouraged to explore the Reserve, with opportunities for short walks and photography. Interpretive signs also enable visitors to discover the rich early European history associated with the Reserve and the living culture of the Arrernte Traditional Owners.

The natural, low key character of the Reserve is reflected in its relatively few management requirements. With an area of only 340 ha, the Reserve is not viable for species conservation. It is home to a relatively small number of native species that are typical of the region. Biodiversity management is therefore a low priority. Management activity will focus on:

- Protecting and interpreting the cultural, historical and natural values
- Providing Traditional Owners with opportunities to work on country
- Preserving the natural, remote and tranquil character of the Reserve
- Enhancing the visitor experience through improved facilities and camping, as far as resources will allow.

Responsibility for decision making will be shared by the partners, being Traditional Owners as a group and the Parks and Wildlife Service. They will be guided by this Plan and jointly developed policy and guidelines. Most decisions will be made at annual planning meetings by the partners, supported by a small Joint Management Committee which will be convened as required. Cross-cultural governance training for both partners will ensure that the partnership is equitable and effective.

Whilst day-to-day management of the Reserve will remain the responsibility of the Parks and Wildlife Service, Traditional Owners will have the opportunity to connect with country and pass on knowledge during planned programs and joint management activities. These will be supported by the Parks and Wildlife Service to the extent allowed by resources and capacity. External resources may be pursued for additional cultural projects identified by Traditional Owners. Other agencies such as the Central Land Council and Tourism NT may assist as appropriate.

While the partners acknowledge that the broader work and training aspirations of Traditional Owners will not be met by joint management alone, every effort will be made by the Parks and Wildlife Service to provide Traditional Owners with work at Chamber's Pillar. In time it is envisaged that Traditional Owners will take up enterprise opportunities in tourism and have capacity to undertake most, if not all, management programs under contract.

## A shared vision

*“People and country doing well.”*

The Traditional Owners of Chamber’s Pillar Historical Reserve and the rangers of the Parks and Wildlife Service value knowledge and want it to be shared and passed on, so that country and culture are looked after now and for future generations.

The joint management partners will continue to communicate clearly and work together in a way that encourages:

- Trust and respect for each other
- Respect for sites and country
- Commitment and progress
- Opportunities for Traditional Owners.



*Visiting country is an important part of keeping country and culture healthy and passing knowledge on.*

# 1. Introduction

## The Reserve and its values

*“That place there, is very important for that gecko man.”*

Chamber's Pillar is a striking and recognisable finger of sandstone, rising from the red desert dunes in a vast landscape of broken, weathered mesas. Viewed from the rugged jump-up to the northeast of the Reserve, it towers an impressive sixty metres above sandy hummock grasslands, groves of desert oaks, mallee and acacia. Against the Central Australian sky, the pale Pillar with its distinctive rust coloured peak is dramatic, particularly at sunrise and sunset.

For the Arrernte Traditional Owners, the Reserve is a cultural landscape imbued with cultural, historical and spiritual significance and forms part of their contemporary identities. The three prominent rock formations in the Reserve – Chamber's Pillar, Castle Rock and Window Rock – are associated with the creation story or Dreaming of the fierce knob tailed gecko man, his promised wives and his mother-in-law.

Chamber's Pillar became a navigational aid more than a century ago when the first European exploration parties reached Central Australia. Many of these early explorers and pioneer settlers of Central Australia engraved their names or initials into the soft sandstone of the Pillar, creating a permanent record of early European colonisation. The Reserve is listed on the Register of the National Estate and has been listed in the NT Register of Heritage Places and Objects under the *Heritage Conservation Act* for the historical engravings on the Pillar.

Some of the first Europeans to describe the Pillar include John McDouall Stuart, Ernest Giles and John Ross, the leader of the Overland Telegraph Line survey team. Stuart named the Pillar after one of the sponsors of his expedition, James Chambers. Castle Rock takes its name from his description of the “remarkable hills which have the appearance of old castles in ruins”.

The Horn Scientific Expedition also visited Chamber's Pillar in 1894. The expedition's biologist Baldwin Spencer became the first to record the story of *Iterrkewarre*, as told to him by Frank Gillen in Alice Springs.

The Reserve (NT portion 843) was first declared under Section 103 of the Crown Lands Ordinance on 1 July 1970. It was declared an Historical Reserve (No. 1277) under Section 12 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* on 30 June 1978 (NTG 26A) and was named under that Act on 21 September 1979 (NTG 38). The entire Reserve was subsequently declared a heritage place under the *Heritage Conservation Act* on 5 October 1994 (NTG G40). The three features on the Reserve are all registered sacred sites under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*.

In 2003, the Reserve was listed on Schedule 1 of the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*. Title has recently been transferred to Traditional Owners under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* and leased to the Northern Territory Government for 99 years and be jointly managed by the Northern Territory Government and the Traditional Owners of Chamber's Pillar.

Despite its small area of only 340.1ha, the Reserve has significant natural, cultural, spiritual, historic and scenic value to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Approximately 6500 people visit the Reserve every year, including those who travel with commercial tour companies.

Located 162 km south of Alice Springs within the Australia's Red Centre National Landscape, the isolated and rugged nature of the Reserve is an attraction in itself. Many visitors value the four wheel drive experience required to access the Reserve, as well as the sand dunes, sandstone ridges and claypans which comprise the spectacular landscape. However, it is the striking butte of the Pillar itself and the historic significance of the engravings which are the primary scenic and tourism attractions of the Reserve.

The Reserve's natural and cultural values offer educational opportunities for the joint management partners and visitors. As the original inhabitants of the area and as workers in the pastoral industry in the region, Traditional Owners have considerable knowledge about the region, its geography, natural resources and local history to contribute to the joint management partners' shared understanding of the Reserve and its surroundings.

The cultural and historic stories associated with the Reserve are of particular interest to visitors. The unique geomorphology of the area also lends itself to furthering public understanding of the processes of landscape formation from both a scientific and Arrernte perspective. Growing interest in co-operative management of protected areas may mean that joint management of this Reserve will be of interest also.

The Reserve is bounded by Maryvale and Idracowra pastoral properties. The nearest settlement is the Aboriginal community of Titjikala with a population of approximately 250 people.



*The three main features of the Reserve are associated with the knob tailed gecko man Dreaming.*



## This Plan

*“Years ago Aboriginal people had no say – we’ve got that chance now.”*

The Parks and Wildlife Service and Traditional Owners, assisted by the Central Land Council, worked together to write this Plan through a number of participatory planning meetings. The interests of local tourism stakeholders have been considered together with the broader regional interests of the tourism industry. This Plan explains how the joint management partners will work together to look after the Reserve, provides for the ongoing conservation of the Reserve’s significant natural, cultural and historic resources and continued public use and enjoyment. It shows how public interests in the Reserve will be best served while recognising the significance of the area to local Arrernte people. It sets management objectives against which the Parks and Wildlife Service, Traditional Owners and the general public may measure progress. The Plan presents both general and specific management directions with respect to the Reserve’s stated purpose and current management issues. It also outlines measures that will ensure future development of the Reserve is well-considered and appropriate. Italicised statements throughout this Plan are quotes from Traditional Owners made during the preparation of this plan.

Chamber's Pillar Historical Reserve will continue to be an important place for low key, nature and culture based tourism. Priorities will include:

- Protecting and interpreting the cultural, historical and natural values
- Fulfilling Traditional Owners’ aspirations to work on country
- Preserving the remote and tranquil character of the Reserve.

This Plan supersedes the 1994 Plan of Management for Chambers Pillar Historical Reserve. It will be reviewed after five years and remain in effect until amended or replaced by a new Plan. A Lease and Indigenous Land Use Agreement provide further information on joint management arrangements.

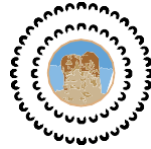
The Aboriginal land subject to this Joint Management Plan is Aboriginal Land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. The Iterrkewarre Aboriginal Land Trust holds title on behalf of Traditional Owners.

*Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife and Central Land Council Staff meet to work on the Plan (2007).*



## The joint management partners

Consistent with the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, the partners responsible for decision making and management are the Parks and Wildlife Service and the Reserve's Traditional Owners.



### Traditional Owners

The Traditional Aboriginal Owners of the Reserve identify as Arrernte and are from the country around the Finke and Hugh Rivers. As a result of their contact history, today a number of people speak the locally recognised version of Arrernte but only a few know the language well. Luritja is also commonly spoken by the Traditional Owners of the area.

Traditional Owners continue to observe cultural traditions and uphold traditional law, maintaining powerful connections to their country guided by the traditional Arandic model of land tenure. According to these principles, people identify with relatively well demarcated totemic tracts of country called *pmere* in Southern Arrernte and referred to as estates in anthropological literature.

These estates are identified by reference to several ancestral sites that make up a song or story line (Dreaming), or sections of such lines. Estates tend to be strongly centred on a main site and/or the major totemic ancestor. The features of Chambers Pillars, Castle Hill and Window Rock are the physical manifestations of one such story line and are a permanent reminder of the importance of the proper way to interact with family. Traditional Owners of the area strongly maintain the stories for Chambers Pillar.

Aboriginal people have rights in an Arandic estate country through descent. They inherit primary rights in country from their father and father's father and are known as *pmerekertweye* ("bosses"). Rights in country through maternal connections are also important and are usually traced through one's mother's father. These people are known as *kwertengwerle* ("managers") and are required for rituals and for "looking after" sites and country for their mother's family.

A third important base for asserting affiliation to country in Arrernte traditions is a person's place of birth, or the birth (or conception) place of one's mother or father. Although *pmerekertweye* and *kwertengwerle* hold different rights and responsibilities, both must be involved in matters relating to the country for which they hold those rights. This is an important aspect of Aboriginal governance and management of country.

In practice it can be difficult for an individual to maintain connections to all the estate countries they have rights in. An individual has to make choices about where to ritually and socially realise his or her rights. This can be achieved by spending much of one's life in a particular area of country and acquiring ritual and ceremonial instructions for it from senior *pmerekertweye* and/or *kwertengwerle*. The strongest rights to country are thus based on being *pmerekertweye* or *kwertengwerle* and knowing the ancestral songs and rituals for that country.



Members of most families have lived and worked together on different pastoral stations along the Finke River for several generations and accordingly, have strong historic associations with the Chamber's Pillar area.

The Arrernte people suffered during the colonial period as their traditional country became the main communications corridor to the south for European explorers, early settlers and pastoralists. The establishment of the Overland Telegraph Line and the completion of the railway to Alice Springs in 1929 further intensified the impact of colonisation on local Aboriginal people.

Access to traditional land was restricted for the Arrernte in the Chambers Pillar area from the 1870s onwards as the South Australian Government leased their land to pastoral interests, hoping to create a large scale cattle industry. By the economic crash of the 1890s, virtually all Arrernte country in the vicinity had been leased to pastoralists. Indigenous populations previously living in an environment with vast and diverse resources, eventually became dependent on a ration based economy associated with outstations and homesteads. Access to water and other resources became restricted and the landscape was denuded by stock.

The drought of 1889-94 further reduced Arrernte people's access to resources and forced Aboriginal people to move from station to station as work became available. In order to survive, Aboriginal people took up ration paying jobs and by the turn of the century low cost Aboriginal labour was fundamental to the establishment of the pastoral industry.

The influenza outbreak of 1919-20 also had a catastrophic impact on the Arrernte population and intensified the impact of colonisation on a population which was becoming increasingly associated with stations and station life. Many Aboriginal people who grew up and worked on pastoral stations such as Maryvale, Idracowra, Horseshoe Bend and Henbury have memories of passing, visiting and camping in the Chamber's Pillar area over many years.

*Traditional Owners maintain powerful connections to their country.*



People would pass by or stop at the Pillar as they journeyed on camels, horses, with bullock-wagons or on foot between the Idracowra and Maryvale homesteads and on to Alice Springs via the old South Road. Aboriginal station workers at Maryvale and Idracowra also recount how they camped with their families at the Pillar when out fencing or doing other jobs for extended periods of time.

The Pillar was a guiding marker in the landscape and a rest area for people travelling between places further out to the east and to the northwest along the Finke River and southwest towards Mt Ebenezer, Eridunda and Curtin Springs.

By the 1950s in the South-Central region, Aboriginal people were encouraged to leave pastoral stations and, apart from the people who have remained in the area as residents of Titjikala and nearby outstations, visits by Aboriginal people to the Chamber's Pillar area became increasingly rare during the 1960s and 1970s. At this time, many Aboriginal station workers were made redundant. They had to move their families into state settlements, missions or Alice Springs. Consequently, many members of Traditional Owner groups have grown up and lived elsewhere, and their visits to the Chamber's Pillar area have been infrequent. Some younger people have not been there at all.

Despite the dislocation of many Arrernte people associated with the area, Traditional Owners strongly maintain their culture and connection to country. They have been involved in business ventures such as Gunya Titjikala and Oak Valley Tours offering cultural tours and camping for domestic and international tourists. People also live and work in Alice Springs and some travel further to pursue careers and lifestyle. While people may be away from country for long periods of time, their strong attachment to the place remains unbroken. Most Traditional Owners who live elsewhere express a strong wish to visit Chamber's Pillar more often.

Traditional Owners are looking forward to the new opportunities afforded by joint management and proud to have regained title to their land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*. They are keen to be involved in all management programs on the Reserve and utilise time spent on country to pass on important knowledge to young people and each other.



### ***The Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory***

The Parks and Wildlife Service is a division of the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport. It is a field-based organisation with approximately 120 rangers supported by scientific, planning, management and administration staff.

The Service is dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural values of parks while providing high-quality nature-based tourism and recreation opportunities for visitors. The Service is committed to engaging the public and working with the interests of the community.

The Territory's park system includes some 87 parks and reserves with a total area of nearly 47000 square kilometres. Parks are a vital investment in our future. They underpin the conservation of our environment and biodiversity. If well-managed they will provide sustainable social and economic benefits. Parks are at the heart of the Territory's tourism industry, our largest employer and second-largest income earner.

The Service has entered an exciting new era. Where previously joint management arrangements have applied to just a few parks, they now apply in Territory law to a third of the parks estate and are integral to the Service's business. The Service is responding with new ways of thinking, introducing new training and other programs to develop rangers' capacity as effective joint managers.

The Parks and Wildlife Service is not new to joint management. Garig Gunuk Barlu National Park in the Top End has been jointly managed since 1981. Other examples include the high profile Nitmiluk National Park and Tnorala (Gosse Bluff) Conservation Reserve. While each park and Traditional Owner group is unique, the Service has learned much from its shared management of these parks.

The Parks and Wildlife Service is committed to seeing that joint management partnerships grow and become truly equitable and that Traditional Owners benefit culturally, socially and economically from joint management.

This Joint Management Plan has been developed by the joint management partners in a very positive spirit. Like the Traditional Owners of the Reserve, the Parks and Wildlife Service is optimistic about the future.

*The Service is rapidly developing its capacity as an effective joint management partner.*



## 2. Making decisions together

*“Talk to Traditional Owners and listen to their feedback.”*



### Introduction

Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service are looking forward to learning and working together. However, both partners acknowledge that the joint management partnership is new and that it will take time to build a strong working relationship.

Making sure that the joint management partners have a process for making decisions is essential for good joint management. Understanding how to make decisions in the right way means that Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service can face challenges and take up opportunities without compromising the values of the Reserve.

This section of the Plan talks about how the partners will make decisions together and outlines these processes.

Joint management of the Reserve will be consistent with this Plan and the:

- *Aboriginal Land Rights (NT) Act*
- Aboriginal law and culture associated with Chamber's Pillar Historical Reserve
- Decisions made by the joint management partners
- *Heritage Conservation Act (NT)*
- ICOMOS 'Burra Charter'
- Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) for Chamber's Pillar Historical Reserve
- Lease to the Northern Territory Government of Chamber's Pillar Historical Reserve
- *Native Title Act*
- *NT Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*
- *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act.*

### Principles for making decisions and working together

- Decision making needs to be equitably shared.
- Traditional decision making processes must be recognised and respected.
  - Old people have the knowledge.
  - *Pmerekertweye* and *kwertengwerle* must be involved in matters relating to country.
  - Men and women will sometimes need to make decisions about different things.



- Good decisions can only be made when both partners have a clear process and guidelines, good information and enough time to consider decisions properly.
- Regular checks are important to ensure good decisions are being made and that joint management is working well.
- Both partners are responsible for making joint management work and need to be committed to that objective.
- Mutual trust and respect is fundamental to successful joint management.
- Listening to each other and communicating honestly are essential to the partnership.

### **Aims**

- To ensure that communication between the partners is strong.
- To make good decisions which meet the needs of the joint management partners, the public and keep country healthy.
- To meaningfully involve Traditional Owners in the Reserve's management and ensure that they benefit from joint management.
- To ensure that the joint management partners are satisfied with the processes and outcomes of joint management and the partnership is equitable.
- To practically implement joint management on the ground and progress the vision and aims of this Plan.

*Good communication makes for good joint management decisions.*



## **Background**

Joint management provides exciting new opportunities for natural resource management, combining traditional knowledge and scientific management. Traditional Owners relate readily to the concept of joint management. They say: “our ancestors worked together to look after that country – we’re just repeating that process”. The success of joint management will be measured against achievement of the aims in this Plan and the satisfaction of the joint management partners.

For Traditional Owners, the relationship between *pmerekertweye* (“bosses”) and *kwertengwerle* (“managers”) is an important part of Aboriginal governance and management of country. This relationship is one of ritual reciprocity and although *pmerekertweye* and *kwertengwerle* hold different rights and responsibilities, both must be involved in decisions relating to their country. Knowledge of songs and rituals for country also plays a primary role in delineating decision making roles for Traditional Owners. Ensuring that elders are acknowledged as the most senior and important custodians of land is also critical for Traditional Owners and for joint management.

Chamber’s Pillar Historical Reserve has relatively few management requirements, and decision making structures aim to streamline the process (see Figure 1). It is important that Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife equitably share responsibility for making decisions about the Reserve as partners.

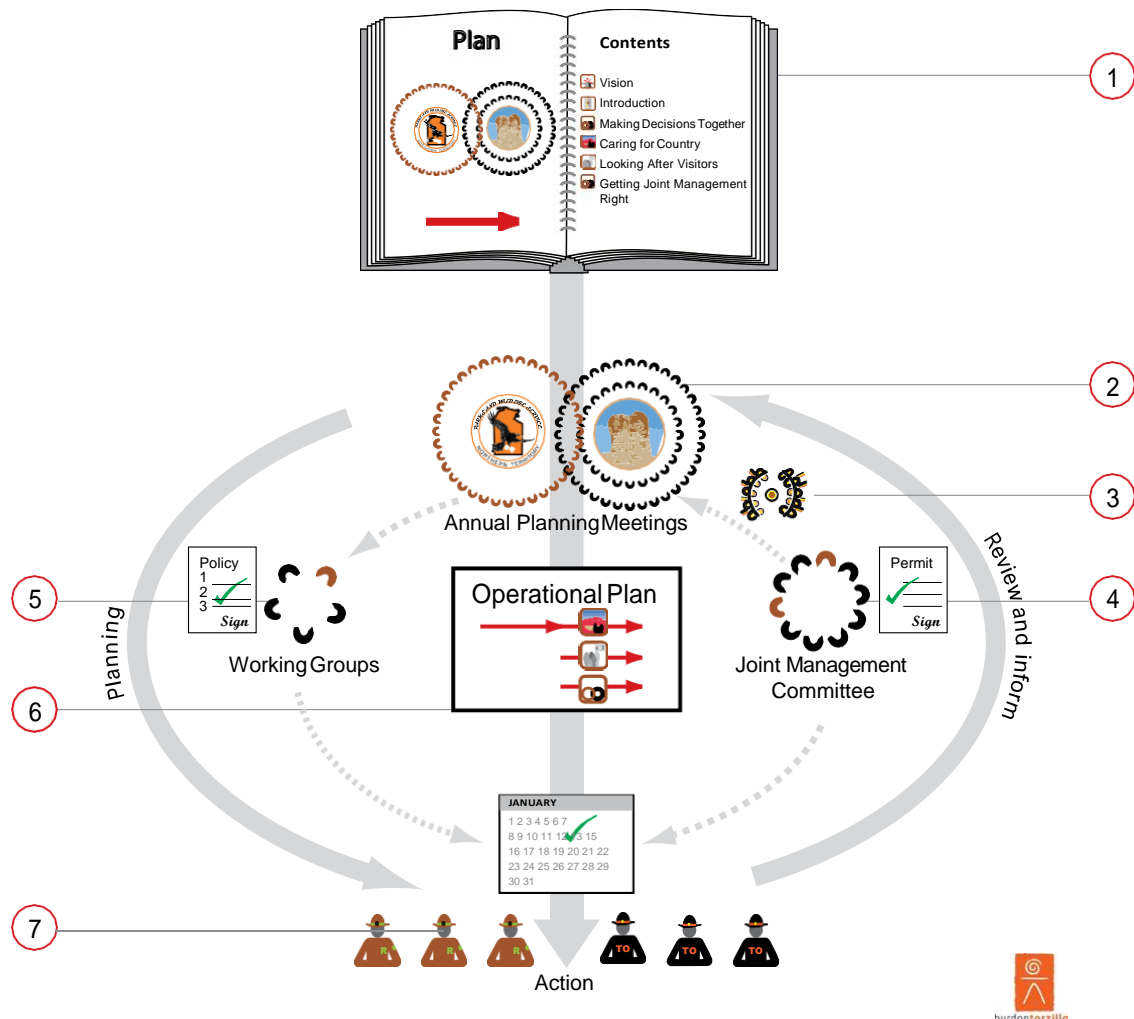
Well developed policy and guidelines are necessary to guide the partners in their decision making. A small Joint Management Committee, consisting of Parks and Wildlife staff and Traditional Owners is required to identify working groups to develop policy and guidelines. The Joint Management Committee may also provide management directions outside of the annual planning cycle if required, on the basis of protocols/guidelines established by the Traditional Owners as a group.

It is recognised that the Parks and Wildlife Service may require targeted cross cultural training to operate effectively and appropriately with the decision making processes of Traditional Owners. Likewise, Traditional Owners may need appropriate training and capacity building to meaningfully participate in joint management.

The Central Land Council (CLC) has an important role in assisting joint management and played a major role in the development of this Plan. The *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* defines the CLC’s role as representing and protecting the interests of the Traditional Owners in relation to the Reserve’s management, in particular to:

- Represent and support Traditional Owners’ interests and facilitate consultations
- Assist with monitoring joint management processes
- Facilitate resolutions between Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife, if needed.

Figure 1: How decision making and planning will work



### Shared decision making and planning

- 1 Joint Management Plan**  
An agreement between the Joint Management Partners about managing the reserve together.
- 2 Annual Planning Meetings**  
Most decisions about how the reserve will be managed will be made at annual planning meetings by all Traditional Owners and rangers.
- 3 Central Land Council**  
Central Land Council will help at meetings and consultations.
- 4 Joint Management Committee**  
For management decisions that cannot wait, a special meeting will be held with the Joint Management Committee. Information will be communicated to all Traditional Owners at annual planning meetings.
- 5 Working groups**  
Small groups of interested Traditional Owners and PWS to review and/or develop policies and procedures and information, as needed.
- 6 Operational Plans**  
Annual plans which set out activities agreed between the Joint Management Partners, reviewed each year.
- 7 The Plan in Action**  
Rangers and Traditional Owners carry out agreed management under the Joint Management Plan and Operational Plan.



## ***Management directions***

**2.1 Annual planning meetings** - Once a year the joint management partners will hold a joint management planning meeting. All Traditional Owners will be invited to attend and participate in decision making. Other stakeholders may be invited to provide information at meetings where appropriate.

The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Share information between the Parks and Wildlife Service and Traditional Owners
- Review progress against management directions in this Plan
- Review satisfaction of the partners with joint management processes and the joint management partnership
- Review and provide advice regarding the development of policies and procedures;
- Approve operational plans for the next year
- Provide direction to the Joint Management Committee.

**2.2 Special meetings** – From time to time, management issues will arise which need to be dealt with outside the annual planning cycle. Examples include whether to approve a permit application to a significant infrastructure or development proposal.

A **Joint Management Committee** will be established comprised of a core group of Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service. This core group will make decisions on behalf of the larger Traditional Owner group on an agreed management activities. Where decisions are particularly significant or culturally sensitive, the whole Traditional Owner group will be involved. The wider Traditional Owner group will be kept informed of any decisions which are made at Joint Management Committee meetings.

**2.3 Working groups** - While there is much that can be achieved at an effective planning meeting, both partners also acknowledge that establishing smaller working groups of Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife representatives may be necessary to develop detailed policies and procedures, plans and information for visitors. The composition of groups will depend on the matters being decided and will be determined by the partners at annual planning meetings or by the Joint Management Committee. Senior Traditional Owners need to be represented in working groups. Traditional Owners will be paid for specialist cultural advice from Parks service funds.

**2.4 Routine operations** – Traditional Owners acknowledge that there are many day-to-day decisions rangers need to make which do not require the explicit approval of the joint management partners. These include decisions made about servicing facilities, visitor monitoring and emergency response. Traditional Owners acknowledge that routine activities are the responsibility of the Parks and Wildlife Service and are happy for rangers to make routine decisions and provide feedback at annual planning meetings.

**2.5 Information exchange** – Joint Management Committee members will be responsible for passing on information to the wider Traditional Owner group. Parks and Wildlife will ensure that information is communicated effectively to Traditional Owners at meetings.

**2.6 Dispute resolution** – The joint management partners will aim to resolve disputes through open discussion and communication, involving the Central Land Council as required or requested by the Traditional Owners. However, should a dispute arise between the joint management partners which cannot be resolved, the partners will follow the dispute resolution process set out in the Lease.

*Protecting the values of the Reserve will underpin all management decisions.*



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## 3. Caring for country

*“When we think about country, we think about the strong Dreaming.”*

### Introduction

The joint management partners and the wider community want to protect Chamber’s Pillar Historical Reserve and ensure that present and future generations can continue to enjoy its scenic attractions while learning about history and culture. This section relates to the management of the Reserve’s cultural and natural resources.

Chamber’s Pillar is a small conservation reserve valued mainly for its history, cultural sites and geomorphology. While a range of plant and animal species are represented, the biodiversity values of the Reserve are not significant. Accordingly, while the partners aim to protect the Reserve from the negative impacts of erosion, weeds and feral animals and ensure that appropriate fire management occurs, management of these and other issues will focus on the needs of visitors and protecting the natural and cultural heritage values of Chambers Pillar, Castle Rock and Window Rock.

The Traditional Owners of Chamber’s Pillar see people and land as fundamentally connected. Joint management then, brings a new way of looking at managing country. Care and protection of natural values is as important as before but will occur with Aboriginal interests and knowledge of country complementing scientific approaches to land management. Traditional Owners say “it’s important for us to teach our kids what it’s there for, who we are”. They want to make sure that looking after country means that knowledge and traditions are maintained and passed on.

### Principles for managing country

- Managing country well means managing natural, cultural and historical values together.
- Land management activities should be consistent with protecting the scenic and historical values of the Reserve.
- The management of sites of cultural significance and culturally related knowledge is the responsibility of Traditional Owners.
- Traditional Owners visiting country is an important part of keeping country and culture healthy and passing knowledge on to the next generation.
- Visitor education and control is essential to protect the special values of the Reserve.
- Erosion is a significant threat to both the features and ecosystems of the Reserve and needs particular management attention.
- Threats such as weeds and feral animals can negatively impact land and wildlife and need to be managed.
- Fire is a natural part of the landscape and needs to be carefully managed.

## Managing cultural and historical values

*“Old people used to look after that place before the rangers.”*

### **Our aims**

- To protect significant sites and people's intellectual property.
- To allow cultural obligations to be fulfilled.
- To incorporate traditional and historical knowledge, skills and experiences into management programs for the Reserve.
- To conserve the historic engravings on the Pillar.
- To ensure that visitors have the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate the cultural and historic values of the Reserve.

### **Background**

#### *A Living Cultural Landscape*

Traditional Owners understand the landscape within and outside the Reserve as a rich body of ancestral activities which invest all its features with powerful and fundamentally life-giving meaning and significance. Respect for country needs to be strongly encouraged across the Reserve. Chambers Pillar, Castle Rock and Window Rock are particular focus for culturally significant songs, dances, stories and knowledge which are all an intrinsic part of Traditional Owners' ways of identifying and connecting to country. These three features are all registered sacred sites under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* and are further protected by the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*.

While maintaining deep and sustained connections to the sites and Dreamings of the Reserve, Traditional Owners acknowledge that since the arrival of non-Aboriginal people to the region the area has been “opened up” and as a result access can no longer be restricted. However, it remains critical that visitors understand the significance of all three sacred sites and behave respectfully in relation to all country in the Reserve. This means that climbing the features is strictly prohibited, other than via the steps and viewing platform provided at the Pillar.

Traditional Owners are responsible for looking after the country under customary law. Parks and Wildlife will accommodate Traditional Owners' customary obligations including respecting the need to access country and maintain traditions, and acknowledgement that men's and women's sites require different management considerations.

Knowledge provided to visitors enhances their cultural experience and promotes respect for the cultural and spiritual aspects of the Reserve. An improved understanding and appreciation may reduce the risk of unintentional damage to significant areas. Traditional Owners are keen to share public stories with visitors, however secret and sacred cultural knowledge will not be available for public information. The Traditional Owners request that the public respect their obligation to maintain the integrity of their culture and traditions.



Arrernte people continue to gather bush foods such as bush tomatoes and witchetty grubs from across the Chamber's Pillar region. Bush medicines and *pituri* (bush tobacco) are other important items which are still collected and many Traditional Owners have considerable knowledge about plant and animal species in the area.

Senior Traditional Owners remember gathering bush tucker and medicines, as well as hunting goanna and small wallaby when they visited and camped in the area. Most men say that the Reserve area itself is not a particularly good habitat for kangaroos or other animals. Hunting has thus not been a main activity here in the past or at the current time.

Under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, Traditional Owners have the right to hunt wildlife, gather bush foods and medicines and use the land in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. Traditional Owners have expressed that they would like to exercise this right and acknowledge that potential impacts of this activity to the values of the reserve should be minimal and must be for traditional purposes only. They also acknowledge that due to the size of the Reserve public safety is a major consideration and the partners have agreed that they will not hunt with firearms.

The impact of traditional hunting and gathering will be reviewed annually at meetings and informally during management activities involving both partners. Bush tucker and wildlife collection should be low key and not significantly impact on the natural and scenic values of the Reserve.

Sustained connection to country means that Traditional Owners have detailed historical knowledge of the region's more recent past and have passed down ancestral knowledge through the generations. This knowledge encompasses Indigenous ecological knowledge, oral histories of times before and after European settlement and knowledge regarding the *Altyerre* (creation time).



*Looking after country means that traditions are maintained and passed on.*

Ensuring that knowledge is passed onto young people is of particular concern to Traditional Owners, recognising that “they need to take it over one day”. They want to share their experiences and teach the young people about special sites and how to look after and use the country. Sharing knowledge between families is also important.

Maintaining and passing this information on remains the responsibility of Traditional Owners. However, joint management can provide opportunities for older and younger Traditional Owners to work together and visit country. Such opportunities may foster the transfer of knowledge to younger generations and the Parks and Wildlife Service aims to assist this process where appropriate.

Traditional Owners are also willing to share knowledge with rangers and the public to improve Reserve management and foster improved understanding of Aboriginal ways of life in the wider community. Traditional Owners' cultural and ecological knowledge will be incorporated for richer interpretation of the Reserve and its values to the public.

Historically, it has predominantly been men's stories and knowledge that have been documented in the region. Future documentation of Aboriginal knowledge for interpretation purposes needs to take into account that men and women often know and act in relation to country in different ways.

#### *Early European history*

Chamber's Pillar has great significance as a place which helps us imagine the recent history of Central Australia. Names engraved into the Pillar are a tangible reminder of colonisation in the region and the stories of explorers, pastoralists and settlers over the past one hundred and fifty years. Old engravings are also a reminder of how Traditional Owners are historically connected to the area and how they have been an indispensable part of the pastoral industry in the region.

*Protecting historic engravings is a key management concern.*





Protecting the historic values of the Reserve is a key management concern. Great care is needed to conserve the historic engravings – once destroyed, they cannot be restored or reconstructed. The joint management partners have obligations to protect the whole Reserve, including the engravings, under the *Heritage Conservation Act*.

The Pillar has already been irreparably damaged by graffiti. The presence of graffiti also encourages further graffiti highlighting the need for community and visitor awareness of the importance of respecting the Pillar. An unpublished report, *Recommendations for the Conservation of Chamber's Pillar* (1995) outlines a number of different methods to disguise or remove graffiti but there is no way to restore the Pillar to its original state. Prior to any work on the engravings, specialist conservation advice will be sought to ensure that the work is consistent with the *Burra Charter* guidelines and consent will be obtained under the *Heritage Conservation Act*.

Recording and monitoring where and when graffiti occurs plays an important part in long-term management of the problem. At present, rangers check for graffiti when they visit the Reserve. Any new inscriptions are photographed and recorded. Signs encourage visitors to respect the historic values of the Pillar and informs them about the legal consequences of vandalism. Rangers also encourage respectful appreciation of the Pillar during winter campfire talks. Graffiti has declined in recent years perhaps as a result of management and growing public awareness.



*Strong joint management will ensure sacred sites are protected according to Traditional Owners' wishes.*



### *Cultural heritage and sacred site clearances*

Protection for places that are of cultural significance in the Northern Territory is afforded under overlapping legislation. The *Heritage Conservation Act* gives specific protection to archaeological sites, resources and declared heritage places in the Northern Territory. As the entire Reserve was declared a heritage place in 1994, clearance must be sought for works to the Reserve.

The Commonwealth *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (N.T.) 1976* (ALRA) gives legal recognition to areas which that Act terms "sacred sites" and defines as:

*"a site that is sacred to Aboriginals or is otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal tradition, and includes any land that, under a law of the Northern Territory, is declared to be sacred to Aboriginals or of significance according to Aboriginal tradition"*.

The ALRA makes it an offence to enter or remain on land that is a sacred site. There are three registered sacred sites on the Reserve.

Complementary Northern Territory legislation, the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* (NTASSA), also provides protection for all sites that fall within the scope of this definition. This protection is generally provided in the form of an Authority Certificate from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) in response to land use proposals. It means that the traditional Aboriginal owners have an enforceable right to say who enters their sacred sites, and what cannot happen on their sacred sites. Illegal entry, works on or use of a sacred site is an offence.

Strong joint management will ensure that sacred sites are protected in accordance with Traditional Owners' wishes. Under the ALRA the Central Land Council have a specific function to *"assist Aboriginals in the taking of measures likely to assist in the protection of sacred sites"* and under its established procedures will carry out this role in facilitating joint management.

### ***Management directions***

**3.1 Aboriginal culture** – Parks and Wildlife acknowledge that Traditional Owners are responsible for their cultural matters and activities on the Reserve and will take their advice.

**3.2 Culturally sensitive areas** – Parks and Wildlife will uphold restrictions for sacred sites or culturally sensitive areas of the Reserve as directed by Traditional Owners. Climbing on the features, other than on the Pillar stairs and platform, is not permitted.

**3.3 Traditional hunting and gathering** – Rights in relation to hunting and harvest of plant materials from the Reserve for traditional purposes will extend only to Traditional Owners and impacts will be reviewed each year. Shooting on the Reserve will not be allowed.

**3.4 Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)** – Traditional Owners will retain ownership and control of their cultural and intellectual property consistent with a policy to be agreed upon between the Central Land Council and the Parks and Wildlife Service.

**3.5 Managing culture and history** – The joint management partners will develop a management program for the Reserve which will support Traditional Owners cultural aspirations where they can be incorporated into management programs. The partners and the Central Land Council will work together to identify additional resources if required. The program will provide for:

- Country visits and activities that will facilitate transmission of cultural knowledge and skills between Traditional Owner families, to the younger generation and to the rangers, as appropriate.
- Consolidation of documented cultural and historical information.
- Recording oral histories and knowledge on the advice of Traditional Owners as needed to better manage the Reserve and protect its values.
- Protection of indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights. See 3.4.
- Identification of knowledge gaps regarding culture and history.
- Research into methods for removing graffiti and preservation of the Pillar.
- Training and employment for Traditional Owners in cultural site management and interpretation.
- Continued graffiti monitoring as a part of routine patrols and encouragement of visitors to respect the Pillar during face to face interpretation.

**3.6 Cultural heritage and sacred site clearances** – The Central Land Council will have sacred site clearance responsibility for all proposed work on the Reserve. However the joint management partners may agree from time to time that a proponent may require an AAPA Authority Certificate under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*. As the entire Reserve is a heritage place, clearance must also be sought under the *Heritage Conservation Act* for works.

## Managing natural and ecological values

*“There used to be seeds for damper  
but there’s nothing now.”*

### **Our aims**

- To protect the natural landscape, scenic values and character of the Reserve from impacts associated with people, wildfire, weeds and feral animals.
- To protect the geology and soils of the Reserve by minimising erosion and rehabilitating eroded areas where appropriate.
- To incorporate Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) into management decisions for the Reserve.

### **Background**

Management of this small Reserve has focused on maintaining visitor facilities, preserving the Pillar and interpreting the natural and cultural features to the public. There are significant challenges associated with preserving and maintaining plant and animal communities when the area of the Reserve is so small and surrounded by pastoral properties. Considerable management effort would need to go into preserving the natural integrity of the Reserve with relatively little reward. As the Reserve is too small for it to be viable for species conservation, this focus of management effort will continue.

### **Scenic character and landscape**

The sparse and gently undulating sand hills of the Reserve and its striking geological features are set amongst sandy hummock grasslands, punctuated by groves of desert oaks, mallee and acacia. The community want to preserve these significant scenic values and ensure that future generations have the opportunity to appreciate them. At sunset and sunrise the Pillar is particularly stunning as the sandstone changes colour with the sun. It is one of the Reserve’s most dramatic attractions.

*Colourful sandstone formations are particularly dramatic at sunrise and sunset.*



Traditional Owners' appreciation of the beauty of this landscape is connected to ancestral deeds of the *Altyerre*, or creation period, which adds to the significance of the Reserve's landscape and the importance of protecting it.

Developments on the Reserve to date have been relatively low key. Both partners agree that this approach should continue, to ensure that the visitor experience and scenic values of the Reserve are preserved.

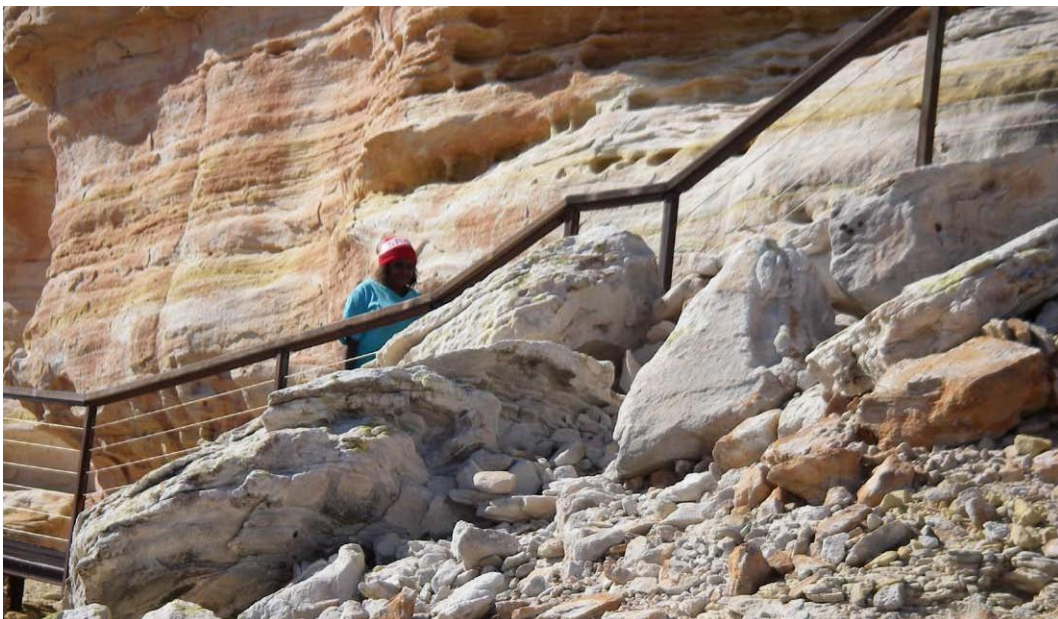
### **Geology**

The Pillar is a significant butte formation comprised of late Devonian or Carboniferous Santo Sandstone, a remnant of the Cretaceous ocean floor. Deep weathering of the original sandstone between 37 and 12 million years ago leached red iron oxides, depositing them into a hard layer that resists erosion. Poorly developed vertical jointing resulted in blocks falling away over time, leaving the vertical walls of Chamber's Pillar with the distinctive rust coloured peak. Other features of the Reserve were formed through similar geomorphological processes.

The sandstone of Chamber's Pillar, Castle Rock and Window Rock is extremely soft and friable. Both partners want to make sure visitors respect the geomorphological and cultural significance of the features. Good interpretive signage which clearly explains appropriate ways for visitors to enjoy the Reserve combined with face to face discussions with rangers encouraging respectful appreciation is probably the most effective way to address this concern.

### **Soils and erosion**

Most of the Reserve consists of gently undulating sand plains with rises and some scattered dunes. Landforms are comprised of siliceous and earthy sands and red brown earths. These soils are very susceptible to erosion by wind, rain and human activities. Accelerated erosion through poorly planned infrastructure and off track walking is a key management concern at the Reserve, posing a real threat to the natural, cultural and recreational values of the Reserve.



*Well planned facilities will protect the values of the Reserve from accelerated erosion.*



Any developments on the Reserve need to consider the potential for erosion. Soil conservation works and repositioning facilities or hardening of areas will be necessary where there is significant erosion due to traffic. Traditional Owners have requested that new soil and gravel extraction for roads and construction is undertaken outside the Reserve.

In 1985 a mining reserve (Reserve from Occupation No 1110, NTG 825) was gazetted to limit exploration and recovery of minerals within the Reserve. In September 2005, an Exploration Permit was granted under the Petroleum Act for a large area that includes the Reserve. The permit is due to expire in 2010 and is subject to a Central Land Council Exploration Agreement that requires consultation with Traditional Owners prior to any works.

The transfer of the Reserve to Aboriginal Freehold will not affect the existing Reserve from Occupation. The partners agree that mining is inconsistent with the scenic, cultural and environmental values of the Reserve. Traditional Owners are particularly concerned that any mining activity will destroy the Reserve and the cultural values associated with it.

### ***Water resources***

The Reserve is located in Australia's arid zone, where surface waters are temporary, occurring only after periods of high rainfall. There is no potable groundwater available for use at the Reserve and there is little chance that pit toilets will affect groundwater at 40 to 45 metres depth. Low visitation also means that visitor impacts from toilets are minimal. It is also highly unlikely that the Reserve's ecosystems are affected by groundwater levels.

*Protecting the scenic values of the Reserve is a priority for the partners.*



### ***Native plants and animals***

Joint management brings expanded opportunities for Traditional Owners to utilise and share their knowledge about native plants and animals. They maintain considerable knowledge about the uses and associations of native plants and animals as foods, medicines and for ceremonial purposes.

Traditional Owners want to make sure their knowledge is passed on to young people. They also want to share information with visitors as an expression of their ongoing connection to country and with rangers to better manage the Reserve. They are entitled to use the natural resources of the Reserve for cultural purposes and will continue to do so to keep their culture strong (see 3.3).

Chamber's Pillar Historical Reserve lies within the arid Finke Bioregion. The Reserve is home to a relatively small number of species typical of the region and does not hold any significant wildlife conservation values.

The vegetation of the Reserve can be broadly described as consisting of hummock grasslands with a sparse shrubland overstorey. *Triodia basedowii* and *Triodia pungens* typify the understorey with *Acacia aneura*, *Acacia kempeana* and *E. gamophylla* frequently dominant in the upper layer. A sparse shrub layer dominated by *Eremophila* and/or *Acacia* spp. is also typical. *Allocasuarina decaisneana* (desert oak) are also a feature of the Reserve.

No comprehensive botanical or fauna survey work has been undertaken at the Reserve. Vegetation communities have not been formally defined or mapped. Records show the presence of the endangered marsupial mole in the vicinity of the Reserve and data is currently unavailable for amphibians or invertebrates. Traditional Owners have expressed an interest in being involved in any future research activities which may occur at the Reserve.

### ***Weeds and feral animals***

Weeds and feral animals can adversely impact on the Reserve's natural and cultural values including reducing the availability of bush tucker and bush medicines. Weed and feral animal management will primarily aim to maintain the scenic value of the Reserve.

While the management of the Reserve aims to maintain and preserve natural habitats, it is not realistic to aim to exclude introduced plant species from the Reserve altogether. The spread of buffel grass is of concern at Chamber's Pillar but any management effort is not likely to be of lasting benefit. Traditional Owners are concerned about how the spread of weeds such as buffel grass has reduced the abundance of bush tucker and bush medicine. However, they are pragmatic about management options and primarily concerned with passing Indigenous ecological knowledge onto the next generation during visits to the Reserve.

Chamber's Pillar Historical Reserve is fenced which generally prevents feral animals such as cattle and camels, which are widespread across the landscape, from entering the Reserve. These fence lines need to be monitored and maintained by rangers to ensure that feral animals do not enter and damage the conservation values of the Reserve. Feral cats and foxes are also present in the Reserve but effective management options do not exist at present.

## **Fire**

Fire has always been a part of the wider desert landscape. Failure to develop and maintain effective fire management practices can affect biological diversity and expose people, personal assets and assets to significant risk through wildfires.

Fire management has been a management program for many years and current focus is on protecting assets such as picnic tables, toilets, shelters and signs and perimeter burns (firebreaks). Fire management programs need to be undertaken in consultation with adjacent landholders.

Traditional Owners have worked with rangers on fire management in the Reserve, through flexible, paid work with the rangers and are keen to remain involved.

### ***Management directions***

**3.7 Scenery** – The natural character of the Reserve will be protected. Any development will be carefully sited and designed to be in harmony with the natural environment and significant sites, so as not to detract from the Reserve's outstanding landscape and scenic values.

**3.8 The Pillar, Castle Rock and Window Rock** – Any proposal that involves disturbance to these features will be subject to approval by the Traditional Owners and appropriate clearances. See **3.6**.

**3.9 Soil erosion** – All management activities will aim to minimise disturbance to the Reserve's soils and involve consultation with soil conservation experts. Rehabilitation of degraded areas will occur on a priority basis. Infrastructure and facilities will be sited to avoid areas susceptible to erosion and will be undertaken with a minimum of soil disturbance.

**3.10 Excavation, mining and exploration** – No soil or gravel extraction will occur inside the Reserve. The partners will seek to ensure that the Reserve from Occupation over the Reserve remains current.

**3.11 Indigenous Ecological Knowledge** – Traditional Owners will retain ownership and control of their Indigenous Ecological Knowledge. See **3.4**. Intergenerational transfer of information about traditional use of plants and animals will be encouraged and communicated to rangers and visitors as appropriate during routine management activities and visits to the Reserve.

**3.12 Flora and fauna recording** - Low key opportunistic monitoring and recording of native vegetation and animals will occur when rangers and Traditional Owners visit the Reserve. Images will be used to provide information at annual planning meetings. Native plants and animals with bush food or medicine value will be managed in accordance with directions from Traditional Owners. See **3.3**.



**3.13 Weed management program** – Management of weeds will guard against major visual impact on the visitor experience and will be reviewed each year. Management will pay particular attention to:

- Practical weed control methods
- Traditional Owners cultural concerns
- Employing Traditional Owners.

**3.14 Feral animal management program** – Rangers will:

- Remove stock and camels from the Reserve
- Maintain stock proof fences to a high standard.

**3.15 Fire management program** – The joint management partners will protect people, personal property and the Reserve from a large, destructive wildfire by:

- Maintaining boundary firebreaks
- Reducing fuel loads around park infrastructure
- Liaising with Reserve neighbours.

**3.16 Stakeholder liaison** – Rangers will continue to liaise with key stakeholders regarding fire, feral and access management as well as tourism opportunities on an “as needed” basis, keeping Traditional Owners informed at annual meetings.



*Boundary breaks and co-operation with neighbours are essential for preventing large wildfires.*

## 4. Looking after visitors

*“Educate tourists about why it’s important to Aboriginal people.”*

### Introduction

This section addresses visitor management and identifies ways of accommodating visitor interests while protecting the values of the Reserve.

Over the years, Chamber's Pillar has attracted many visitors including early explorers, pioneer settlers and different groups of Aboriginal people, who have all used the Pillar as a guiding marker and a rest area. Visitors are still captivated by the magnificence of the Pillar, as was Giles when he departed on his expedition of 1872:

*“We turned our backs on this peculiar monument and left it in its loneliness and its grandeur – clothed in white sandstone, mystic, wonderful.”*

Today, the spectacular natural formations of Chamber's Pillar, Castle Rock and Window Rock remain the principal appeal of the Reserve for the general public. These formations are particularly impressive at sunrise and sunset. The Reserve also attracts visitors with an interest in the historic engravings on the Pillar and an appreciation of the remote desert landscape, accessible only by four wheel drive.

The joint management partners agree the following key messages should be communicated to visitors:

- We welcome you to experience this remote and tranquil place.
- We encourage you to learn about and respect the significant cultural and historical values.
- Please do not climb on the formations or damage parts of the Reserve.
- Help us to look after this special place by using the facilities provided and keeping the area natural.
- Make sure you stay safe and remember to bring water.

### Principles for managing visitors

- Sharing the historical and cultural significance of the area and Traditional Owners continued connection to country with visitors through enjoyable and enriching experiences will encourage respect and protection of the Reserve.
- Visitor safety is paramount.
- Tourism provides benefits to the local community through promotion and increased demand for visitor services.

- Well designed facilities and infrastructure protects Reserve values and promotes positive visitor experiences.
- Monitoring visitor satisfaction, numbers and activities can improve management planning and identify enterprise opportunities for Traditional Owners.

### ***Our aims***

- To enable visitors to safely access and enjoy the Reserve without compromising the Reserve's values for future generations.
- To ensure that visitors have the opportunity to expand their understanding of the cultural, historic and natural values of the Reserve and region.

### **Access**

In 2007 approximately 6500 people visited Chambers Pillar Historical Reserve. Visitation has been significantly higher in previous years, peaking in 2002 at over 8000. Most travel to the Reserve in private vehicles but a small number also attend with tour groups. Located within Australia's Red Centre National Landscape, the isolated and rugged nature of the Reserve is an attraction in itself with many visitors valuing the four wheel drive experience of accessing the Park as well as the spectacular natural landscape. The partners and visitors would like to see the quiet and peaceful nature of the Reserve maintained.

The access road to the park is four wheel drive only. Crossing the sandy bed of the Hugh River, the drive to Chamber's Pillar Historical Reserve follows the Charlotte Range west, crossing stark gibber plains gradually giving way to gently undulating sand dunes. Recent upgrades to the access road by capping dune crests and creek crossings has the potential to detract from the Reserve's appeal as a remote and tranquil destination by making the reserve more accessible to a wider range of vehicles. Vehicle access off marked tracks is not permitted within the Reserve.

Some Traditional Owners are concerned that the main access road to the campground runs too close to Castle Rock and sections of the access tracks and car parks for Chamber's Pillar and Castle Rock are subject to flooding and erosion. Soil conservation measures are required to protect the sensitive claypans from vehicle impact.

Although early ethnographic texts indicate that access to the Pillar was historically prohibited to all but the oldest and most trustworthy ritual men, access restrictions have not been in place for a long time. Senior knowledgeable Traditional Owners have said that the area is "free" and "open" for people to visit providing they show proper respect and keep off the formations. Accordingly, access to Chamber's Pillar is limited to the steps and viewing platform and visitors are not permitted to climb Castle Rock or Window Rock. Further, the friable sandstone of the features is easily damaged and expanded access would place their integrity and visitor safety at risk.

Typically, visitors to the Reserve do not venture beyond observing the Pillar and Castle Rock via marked tracks. Traditional Owners and rangers encourage visitors to remain on marked walking tracks to minimise erosion and protect the natural values of the area.

### ***Facilities and activities***

Facilities are low key. The current campground is located approximately 300 metres from Chamber's Pillar and consists of ten campsites with two gas barbecues, eight picnic tables, five fire places and two pit toilets. There is no water available at the campground. Overnight camping fees are consistent with Parks and Wildlife standards across the Northern Territory and are paid through an honesty system.

A bough interpretation shelter with information about the Pillar and its geological and cultural significance is sited next to the campground. A short walk over the sand dunes brings visitors to the base of the Pillar. Visitors can enjoy the short walk around the base of the Pillar and out to the sunset viewing area where they can learn more about the feature from interpretive signs. Concrete steps and a steel viewing platform enable more energetic visitors to view the historic engravings closely. Visitors are able to view all aspects of Castle Rock via a marked track but there is no interpretive signage at the feature itself.

Whilst protecting the soft sandstone from erosion, the viewing platform at the Pillar detracts significantly from the low key nature of the Reserve and the visual amenity of the Pillar. Visitors, photography enthusiasts and the tourism sector frequently complain about the high visual impact of the structure which makes it difficult to capture a "natural" image from any angle.

An increase in the number of camper trailers and congestion in the campground and car parks during the peak tourist season diminishes the quality of visitor experiences, puts pressure on facilities and exacerbates problems such as illegal roadside camping and erosion. The existing campground area has been compacted over time and is subject to erosion.

The joint management partners have expressed interest in establishing improved camping facilities at the Reserve and both partners will be involved in the process of planning and redeveloping this facility. Traditional Owners have also suggested expanding the facilities at the Reserve to accommodate their ideas for potential tourism enterprises.

*Facilities should be low key and not detract from the Reserve's natural and scenic values.*





Chamber's Pillar Historical Reserve will continue to be managed for day visitors and campers. Campground cleaning and maintenance is undertaken on a weekly basis from May through September and fortnightly during summer.

Activities at the Reserve centre on visitors appreciating the scenic and historic values of the Reserve by viewing the geological formations and enjoying short walks. Photography is also a key activity at the Reserve, particularly at sunrise and sunset. It is hoped that cultural tours and talks will become a larger part of the visitor experience.

### ***Information, interpretation and education***

Information and interpretation plays an important role in visitor management and enjoyment by informing people about the values of the Reserve and how visitors can help protect them. Public education informs visitors about facilities, activities and relevant regulations and explains or interprets the Reserve's natural, cultural and historic features. Visitors are generally keen to learn more about Aboriginal culture and value the opportunity to meet local Indigenous people extremely highly.

Visiting Chamber's Pillar presents an opportunity for visitors to connect with local Arrernte people who retain their culture, their stories and connection to their country. Understanding that the Reserve is a living cultural landscape can enhance visitors' appreciation of the place and its people and encourage visitors to enjoy the Reserve with greater respect.

During winter, rangers give a weekly campfire talk which informs visitors about the cultural, geomorphological and historical values of the Reserve. Traditional Owners have expressed considerable interest in being involved in this type of personal interpretation. Some Traditional Owners have been employed in the tourism industry in the cooler months through a local tourism venture, Gunya Titjikala. Traditional Owners have also suggested educational activities which involve schools and young people from Titjikala and Alice Springs.

Visitor information is provided on interpretive signs at the bough shelter, viewing platform, sunset viewing area and at the base of the Pillar. The information focuses on the Reserve's fauna, flora, geomorphology, Aboriginal and historical values.



*Visitors will be able to learn more about the significance of the area to the Reserve's Traditional Owners.*

During the term of this Plan, signs will be updated to explain the importance of the Reserve to Traditional Owners in a contemporary context and provide Aboriginal place names. Traditional Owners would like the name of the Reserve to be changed to reflect their strong connection to country, the cultural values of the area and joint management. Traditional Owners will decide on an appropriate name through decision making processes outlined in Section 2.

### **Safety**

Chamber's Pillar is a relatively safe place for visitors. Visitor information includes safety information. Although the Parks and Wildlife Service currently has emergency response procedures for all parks and reserves including Chamber's Pillar, its remote location underscores the need for visitors to be self reliant and prepared.

### **Management directions**

#### **4.1 Access**

- **Vehicles** – Vehicles will continue to be restricted to designated tracks.
- **Bushwalking** - Visitors will be encouraged to remain on the marked walking tracks, but can access other areas of the reserve providing they “tread lightly” and do not climb on the features. Visitors are not permitted to climb Castle Rock or Window Rock. Access to Chamber's Pillar will be restricted to the stairs and viewing platform.
- **Camping and camp fires** – Camping will only be permitted in the campground. Visitors will be permitted to have fires only in fireplaces provided. Access road signage will inform visitors that firewood collection inside the Reserve is prohibited.
- **Pets** – Entry of pets will be consistent with existing Parks and Wildlife policy.
- **Rehabilitation** - Areas may be closed for erosion control and rehabilitation.
- **Cultural business** – The Reserve, or areas within it may be temporarily closed to the public for important ceremonies. See 3.2. This infrequent event would be subject to high profile public notice and involve communication with the Tourism Industry.

**4.2 Future developments** –The need to protect scenic, cultural, historical values and the character of the Reserve will underpin any future developments or changes to access and will be in keeping with these values. See 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9. Decisions will be made in accordance with structures and processes outlined in section 2 and will be subject to appropriate site clearances. See 3.6.

- **Vehicular access** – The public access track to Chamber's Pillar will be terminated at the campground due to flooding and erosion issues.

When funding becomes available, a section of the main access road will be realigned to protect Castle Rock and associated claypan.



The partners will liaise with the Road Network Division of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure to ensure the remote experience of accessing the Reserve is preserved.

- **Campground** – The joint management partners will re-design, expand and/or relocate the campground to accommodate camper trailers, ensure a high quality visitor experience and protect the area's sensitive environment from erosion. Consideration will be given to developing an area in the north west of the Reserve for joint management meetings and Traditional Owner tourism enterprises.
- **Walking tracks** – Sections of existing walking tracks will be realigned, formed up and hardened off to ensure safety and prevent erosion. A new track will be developed to link proposed camping to existing tracks.

The visual impact of the Pillar viewing platform will be reduced and alternative ways to view and appreciate the historic engravings will continue to be investigated.

**4.3 Community education and interpretative program** – Both partners will be involved in planning and delivering interpretation, information and community education programs where possible. Traditional Owners will ensure that all Aboriginal cultural information shared with visitors is accurate and appropriate. See 3.4.

**4.4 Signs and language** – The joint management partners will consider options for updating interpretive signage to ensure that Arrernte people, place names and language are represented. The name of the Reserve may be changed to reflect its cultural values more accurately. A transition period may be required to reduce market confusion.

**4.5 Visitor safety** – The Reserve's facilities and visitor management practices will be subject to ongoing risk assessment. Identified risks will be rectified on a priority basis. The emergency response plan will be annually reviewed and rangers will receive appropriate training.



*Proposed developments aim to improve access and visitor enjoyment all year round.*

## 5. Getting joint management right

*“If people are working on country,  
they can keep culture strong.”*

### Introduction

This section addresses the business of managing operational resources—including staff, funding and facilities - to support the implementation of actions identified in this Plan. Other important management activities include the administration of permits and commercial operations, and stakeholder engagement.

Whilst the Reserve is small and remote, joint management provides both new and continued opportunities for Traditional Owners to benefit from and participate in tourism and commercial enterprises associated with the Reserve. The joint management partners recognise that long-term support and capacity building will be needed for Traditional Owners to take up available opportunities. Bridging the gap will require training, employment and enterprise development, all of which are addressed in this section.

The need to continuously improve the knowledge base that supports management decision-making and to monitor change is integral to effective management. Administration of research, survey and monitoring activity is therefore addressed in this section.

### Principles for managing business

- Management should focus on protecting the core values of the Reserve and use resources effectively.
- Participation, training and employment for Traditional Owners are joint management priorities.
- Well managed and appropriate enterprises can enhance visitors' experience of the Reserve and contribute to the local economy.
- Progress will be achieved by competent, well trained staff working towards outcomes in collaboration with Traditional Owners.
- Research, survey and monitoring of the Reserve's natural and cultural resources makes for better informed management decisions.
- Public support for the joint management of the Reserve is important and engaging stakeholders will assist with protection of the Reserve's core values.

## ***Aims***

- To ensure the directions of this Plan are achieved with adequate resources used efficiently.
- To support Traditional Owners to take full advantage of available employment opportunities.
- To support the uptake of concessions and contracts by local Aboriginal organisations and encourage emerging Aboriginal tourism enterprises associated with the Reserve.
- To encourage research, survey and monitoring activities that improves the community knowledge base and allow for better decision making.
- To ensure the public messages and images of the Reserve are accurate, appropriate and consistent with its values.
- To foster a supportive regional community and productive relations with others who have an interest in the Reserve's management.

## ***Management, resources and operations***

While it is intended that the management directions presented in this Plan are achieved, it must be remembered that practically all funding to manage the Reserve and funding to undertake proposed development is provided by the Northern Territory Government in the context of the Northern Territory wide park system. Resources for Chamber's Pillar – including staff, operational funds and capital resources such as vehicles and fire fighting equipment – are shared with other parks and reserves. Major works are funded through the minor and capital works programs and are subject to broader government priorities.

Due to its small size, Chamber's Pillar Historical Reserve is unstaffed and managed as a part of the Central District Parks cluster. Rangers visit at least once a week from May through September when visitor activity is highest and generally once a fortnight from October until April. The Central District currently operates with six permanent staff positions, four Indigenous trainees, a Senior District Ranger and a Chief District Ranger - responsible for East, Central and Barkly Districts – all based in Alice Springs.

Joint management can provide for the Traditional Owners to live on parks and reserves as a means for them to more actively contribute to natural and cultural resource management. Traditional Owners have said that they do not want to establish a living area on the Reserve itself. However, there are some Traditional Owner groups who are interested in establishing living areas in close proximity to Chamber's Pillar. The Reserve is surrounded by pastoral properties. There are no proposals to expand the Reserve.

The small size of the Reserve reinforces the importance of working closely with neighbours and other stakeholders. Chamber's Pillar is bounded by Maryvale and Idracowra pastoral properties and access to the Reserve is through Maryvale Station. Titjikala community is another important stakeholder and many residents of the community have strong interests in ensuring the Reserve is well managed.

### ***Training, employment and enterprise development***

Parks and Wildlife maintains a professional ranger work force. Staff will continue to participate in performance appraisal and career guidance programs as a means to monitoring staff satisfaction and identifying and meeting individual staff training needs. In addition, staff satisfaction and occupational health and safety will remain a key management concern.

Ensuring that the Parks and Wildlife Service staff and Traditional Owners receive appropriate training to enable them to actively and meaningfully participate in the processes of joint management is also critical to the joint management partnership. Governance training will be provided to the joint management partners in collaboration with the Central Land Council.

Throughout the planning process, Traditional Owners of Chamber's Pillar have highlighted the importance of employment for their families. They look forward to new opportunities as well as continuing and expanding existing ventures, working out on country and applying their skills, knowledge and expertise to better look after the Reserve. Both young people and older people can benefit from employment through the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Both flexible and permanent positions working at Chamber's Pillar will be limited by the scope of management activities at this small reserve and the number of full-time ranger positions available. While the Parks and Wildlife Service will make every effort to employ Traditional Owners and local Aboriginal people to work at Chamber's Pillar, it is important to acknowledge that the broader employment aspirations of Traditional Owners and their families cannot be met by joint management alone. Consequently, employment and training plans developed by the partners will need to be developed within a regional context and will involve other groups and organisations as required.

Parks and Wildlife will continue to offer flexible or periodic casual employment to Traditional Owners, their families and local Aboriginal people at Chamber's Pillar. Project based employment provides many benefits including work experience, skills exchange and an opportunity to build long-term working relationships. Traditional Owners at Chamber's Pillar and Rainbow Valley have been employed in burning, fencing, surveys and construction projects, with many receiving accredited training in the process. They say "we feel proud to be working on country".

Increased employment of Aboriginal people in the ranger workforce is a goal of the Parks and Wildlife Service, and local Aboriginal people will be encouraged to apply when positions become vacant. Support will be provided to potential employees who express interest and commitment. Suitably qualified Aboriginal people will be actively encouraged to fill any Parks and Wildlife vacancy.

Chamber's Pillar is a small Reserve visited by comparatively few people. However there remain some opportunities for Indigenous enterprises to be developed, particularly in the area of tourism. Indigenous tourism ventures roughly an hour's drive to the Reserve include luxury tent camping at Gunya Titjikala and Oak Valley tours and campground. These ventures highlight that Traditional Owners already have skills and experience in this area and underscore the need for a regional approach.

Tourism research continues to highlight the demand for Indigenous cultural experiences by international and domestic visitors to the Northern Territory. Research also suggests that for many visitors these experiences are not realised. Joint management provides an opportunity for Traditional Owners to present their living culture from their own perspective to visitors from all over Australia and the world. Traditional Owners have expressed particular interest in becoming more involved in the face to face interpretation of the Reserve to visitors and developing and selling products to tourists.

The joint management partners will liaise with the tourism industry and explore options for the development and promotion of tourism opportunities. Tourism NT is supportive of Traditional Owners' tourism aspirations and is willing to assist where appropriate.

While much of the maintenance of the Reserve is carried out by rangers, there are times when contracts may be let to carry out works which could employ Aboriginal people or businesses. The Lease provides for preference to be given to local Aboriginal people and businesses applying for contract work where capacity to meet contract requirements is demonstrated. In time, it is hoped that many programs for the Reserve can be partially or fully contracted to Aboriginal owned businesses. Potential concessions and maintenance contracts for the Reserve include construction, fencing, track work, repairs, campground management and maintenance.



*Traditional Owners are pursuing new opportunities to work on country and gain skills and training.*



### ***Permits and commercial activities***

Commercial activities on Northern Territory parks and reserves require a permit under By-law 13 of the *Territory Parks and Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws*. These permits state the rules and regulations permit holders need to abide by to ensure that their activities do not negatively affect the values of the park or reserve. Commercial activities at Chamber's Pillar are typically limited to filming and tours.

Since 2006 tour companies visiting Northern Territory parks and reserves have been required to have a permit issued under the Tour Operator Permit System. This system makes it possible to monitor operator activities and the impact of tour groups. It also provides a means for the joint management partners to communicate with tour operators that use the Reserve.

With the approval of the joint management partners and consent of the Iteerrkewarre Aboriginal Land Trust, this Plan also provides the Northern Territory Government, as the lessee, the right to sublease or license portions of the Reserve for the purposes of public infrastructure.

No concession permits for the Reserve have been issued to date. Under the joint management arrangements the Lease provides for preference to be given to local Aboriginal people and businesses in granting licenses and leases to operate concessions where capacity is demonstrated.

The joint management partners want to promote the Reserve to tourists and to the wider community. However, it is important that information and images distributed to visitors are accurate and appropriate. Commercial filming and photography permits will be issued in accordance with the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws*. The Commercial Filming and Photography Policy and related procedures of the Parks and Wildlife Service allow individual parks and reserves to have supplementary commercial filming and photography policies and guidelines.

Practical commercial film and photography guidelines are necessary. A working group will develop guidelines which reflect the interests of the joint management partners in relation to this Reserve. Composition of the working group will be determined by the partners at an annual planning meeting or by the Joint Management Committee.

*Permits may be required for some activities.*





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### ***Research, survey and monitoring***

Effective management decisions need good information about the Reserve's values, visitor use, environmental trends and the effectiveness of management actions.

Most research, survey and monitoring programs are carried out as internal projects by the Parks and Wildlife Service. There has been little research or monitoring carried out at the Reserve due to its small size and low biological values. Despite this, research will be encouraged and approved research applications will be issued with a Research Permit in accordance with the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws*. Traditional Owners have knowledge of the Reserve that can contribute to research outcomes. A working group will develop guidelines for approving external research proposals that complement Parks and Wildlife policy. Composition of the working group will be determined by the partners at an annual planning meeting or by the Joint Management Committee. Traditional Owner participation and employment will be actively encouraged in research, survey and monitoring projects. Policy agreed by the partners and research permit conditions will require the cultural and intellectual property rights of Traditional Owners are protected.

Visitor monitoring is essential to effectively manage the Reserve. Data on visitor numbers, demographics, behaviour and satisfaction levels can be used to guide aspects of visitor management. Planning and design of facilities and interpretation programs relies largely on data from visitor monitoring programs.

Visitor monitoring also has the potential to provide valuable information to Traditional Owners interested in developing tourism enterprises. Traditional Owners will be kept informed about upcoming visitor surveys and given the opportunity to contribute to the direction such surveys take.

Joint management success will be measured against achievement of the aims in this plan and the satisfaction of the joint management partners. Keeping good photographic records of works and activities on the Reserve is one way to ensure that progress is measurable and communicated to Traditional Owners.

### ***Management directions***

**5.1 Management programs and annual operational plans** – The joint management partners will plan and review management programs and annual operational plans for the Reserve. Paid Traditional Owner involvement in Reserve management programs will be maximised.

**5.2 Day-to-day management** – The Parks and Wildlife Service will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Reserve.

**5.3 Financing** – Parks and Wildlife will finance and resource the Reserve's ongoing management including administrative functions, staff, infrastructure and services. External funds may be sought to address specific joint management projects and culturally based projects of Traditional Owner interest.

**5.4 Living areas and expansion of the Reserve** – Any future proposals for living areas on, or in the vicinity of the Reserve, or expansion of the Reserve, will be considered by the joint management partners.

**5.5 Training, employment and enterprise development** – Achievable operational plans and a program for training, employment and enterprise development will be determined by the partners every year. Opportunities, including direct and flexible employment, contracts and enterprise development will be reviewed annually, together with Traditional Owners' interests and capacity. Engagement of Traditional Owners will be consistent with NT Government legislation and policies and will be a primary objective for Parks and Wildlife Service as a joint management partner. The Parks and Wildlife Service will ensure that administrative processes are efficient and where it cannot directly assist, will endeavour to arrange training and business development support to Traditional Owners through other agencies.

- **Professional development** – Professional standards and competencies of staff will be supported by ongoing training in all aspects of park management with special emphasis on cross-cultural training run by both Traditional Owners and other providers.
- **Governance training** – Governance training will be provided to the joint management partners to improve their understanding of the responsibilities of joint management and equip them with the tools and skills to work effectively in the partnership.
- **Indigenous employment opportunities** – Parks and Wildlife will continue to identify and provide opportunities for flexible and direct employment and training for Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal ranger traineeship program will continue as a means to increase opportunities for local Aboriginal people to become rangers.
- **Contract services** – Traditional Owners that can demonstrate capability and Aboriginal organisations they support will be preferred contract service providers. Other contractors providing training and employment to local Aboriginal people will be regarded favourably.

- **Tourism** – Traditional Owners will be encouraged to continue to take up commercial tourism opportunities including camp fire talks, campground maintenance, cultural tours or other viable enterprises. Appropriate support will be provided and agencies such as the Central Land Council will assist with developing ideas and identifying service providers to assist with developing business plans, skills and funding sources. The joint management partners will liaise with the tourism industry through established forums and organisations as required.

**5.6 Permits** – Working groups will develop guidelines which reflect the interests of the joint management partners in relation to this Reserve. Composition of the working group will be determined by the partners at annual planning meetings or by the Joint Management Committee. Guidelines will be developed for a range of permit applications including: commercial film and photography permits; concessions; public gatherings; tour operators; and research. Where proposed activities comply with the general guidelines developed by the partners, permits may be issued without consulting with Traditional Owners. Consultation with the Traditional Owners will be required if the proposal involves special access, may be in conflict with the wishes of Traditional Owners or may be part of a major commercial project.

In the interim period, the Parks and Wildlife Service will inform the Central Land Council of all permit applications and the Joint Management Committee or Traditional Owners will be consulted where appropriate.

### **5.7 Monitoring and evaluation**

- **Research, survey and monitoring** – Programs will be described in operational plans and be subject to annual review by the joint management partners. Participation by Traditional Owners and employment in research, survey and monitoring projects will be maximised. Aboriginal knowledge will be incorporated in project objectives and outcomes where appropriate. Intellectual cultural and property rights of Traditional Owners will be protected. See 3.4.
- **Visitor monitoring** – Visitor monitoring projects will be determined by the partners and conducted locally using existing resources. Where data is available, visitor numbers, impacts, activities and satisfaction results will be fed back to the joint management partners for planning and decision-making. Co-operation with Tourism NT for four wheel drive market development research will be encouraged.
- **Performance monitoring** – Management performance monitoring will be carried out through:
  - Annual review of operational plans, measuring their success against the aims and objectives of this Plan
  - Monitoring the joint management partners' satisfaction.

A framework for satisfaction monitoring will be developed by the partners.

## 6. Appendixes

### Appendix 1. Selected information sources

Australia ICOMOS, 1999. *The Burra Charter*.

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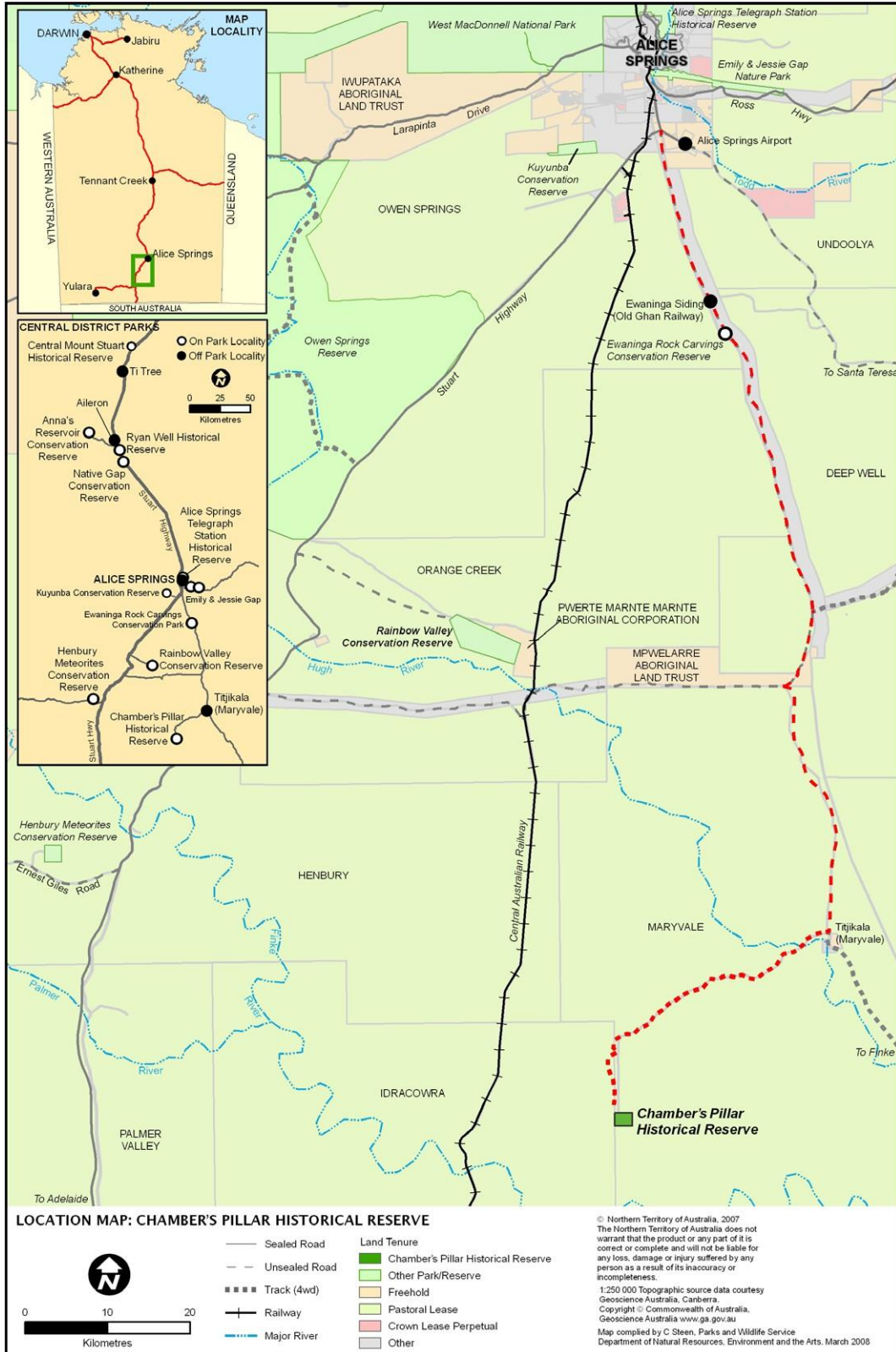
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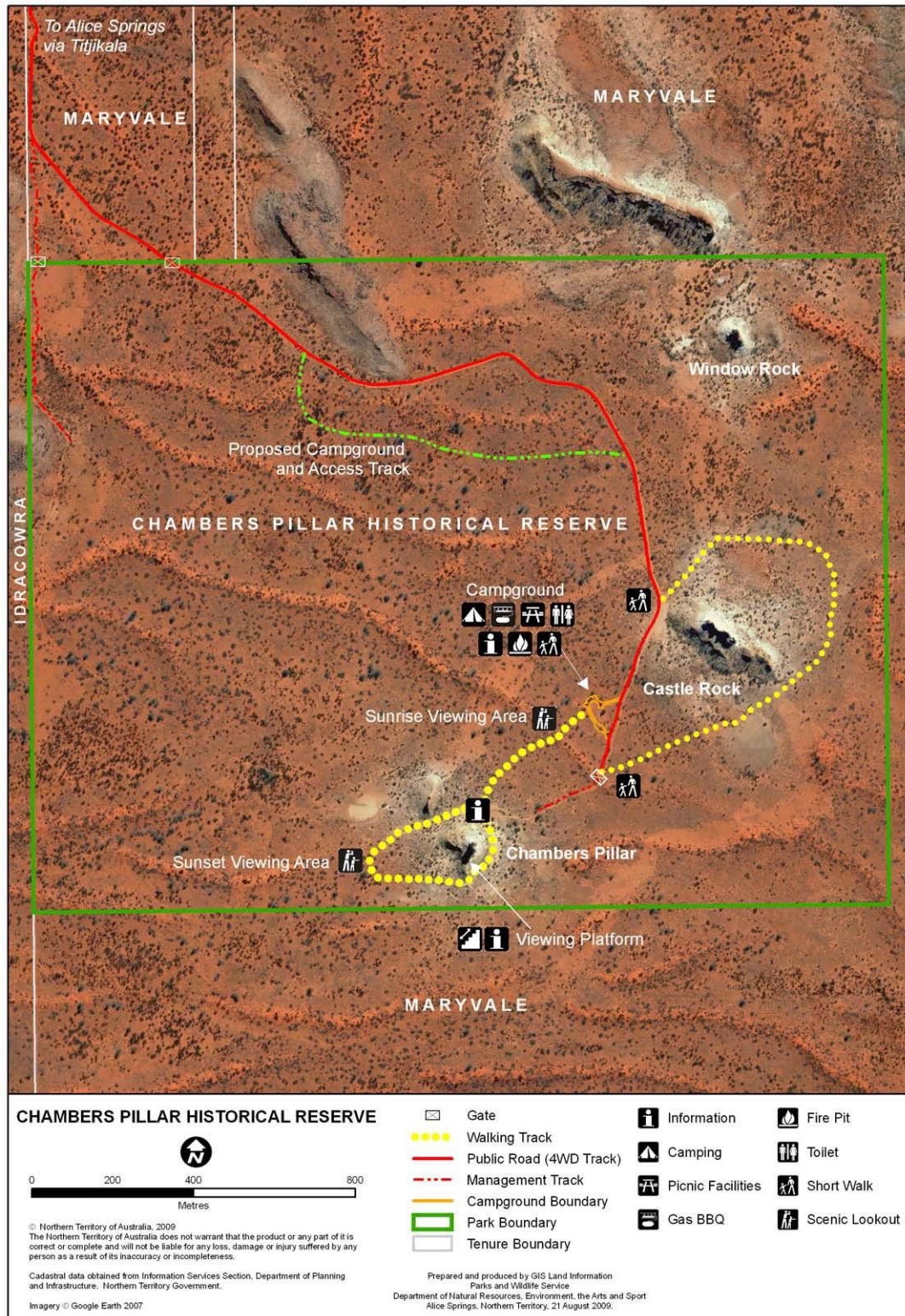
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## Appendix 2. Reserve location





### Appendix 3. Reserve map





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## **Appendix 4. Extracts from the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act***

part iii – joint management of certain parks and reserves

**Division 3 – Joint management partners, objective and principles**

### **25AA. Joint management partners**

**(1) The joint management partners for a park or reserve are –**

- (a) the Territory or a body nominated by the Territory as the representative of the Territory; and
- (b) the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve.

**(2) The joint management partners are together responsible for the management of the park or reserve.**

**(3) The joint management partners must perform their functions under this Part in respect of a park or reserve in a manner that –**

- (a) is consistent with any lease referred to in section 8(c) or 10(1)(f) of the *Framework Act* entered into in respect of the park or reserve;
- (b) is consistent with the joint management agreement referred to in section 8(d) of the *Framework Act* entered into in respect of the park or reserve;
- (c) is consistent with any indigenous land use agreement referred to in section 8(e) of the *Framework Act* entered into in respect of the park or reserve;
- (d) achieves the objective stated in section 25AB;
- (e) is in accordance with the principles stated in section 25AC; and
- (f) is in accordance with the joint management plan for the park or reserve.

### **25AB. Objective of joint management**

The objective of joint management of a park or reserve is to jointly establish an equitable partnership to manage and maintain the park or reserve as part of a comprehensive and representative system of parks and reserves in the Territory and for the following purposes:

- (a) benefiting both the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve and the wider community;
- (b) protecting biological diversity;
- (c) serving visitor and community needs for education and enjoyment.

**25AC. Principles of joint management**

The objective is to be achieved by managing the park or reserve in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) recognising, valuing and incorporating Aboriginal culture, knowledge and decision making processes;
- (b) utilising the combined land management skills and expertise of both joint management partners;
- (c) recognising and addressing the need for institutional support and capacity building of the joint management partners;
- (d) recognising that community living areas in or in close proximity to parks and reserves are an integral part of the natural and cultural resource management of parks and reserves;
- (e) involving continuing statutory responsibilities and functions of the Minister with respect to parks and reserves;
- (f) managing parks and reserves may include cooperative management agreements for areas of land outside parks and reserves;
- (g) establishing a process for the consideration of applications for mining an petroleum

**Division 6 – Role of Land Councils**

**25AO. Functions of Land Councils in relation to parks and reserves**

(1) Pursuant to section 23(2) of ALRA, the following functions are conferred on a Land Council:

- (a) to ascertain and express the wishes and the opinion of Aboriginals living in its area as to the management of the parks and reserves in that area and as to appropriate legislation concerning those parks and reserves;
- (b) to protect the interests of the traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aboriginals interested in, those parks and reserves;
- (c) to consult with the traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aboriginals interested in, those parks and reserves about the use of those parks and reserves;
- (d) to negotiate with persons desiring to obtain an estate or interest (including a licence) in any of those parks or reserves on behalf of the traditional Aboriginal owners of that park or reserve and any other Aboriginals interested in that park or reserve;
- (e) to supervise, and provide administrative and other assistance to, the Park Land Trusts holding, or established to hold, park freehold title in parks and reserves in its area.

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**(2) In carrying out its functions under subsection (1) in relation to a park or reserve in its area, a Land Council must have regard to the interests of, and must consult with, the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve and any other Aboriginals interested in the park or reserve and, in particular, must not take any action (including, but not limited to, the giving or withholding of consent in any matter in connection with the park freehold title held by a Park Land Trust) unless the Land Council is satisfied that –**

- (a) the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve understand the nature and purpose of the proposed action and, as a group, consent to it; and
- (b) any Aboriginal community or group that may be affected by the proposed action has been consulted and has had adequate opportunity to express its view to the Land Council.

**(3) In this section –**

“area”, in relation to a Land Council, has the same meaning as in ALRA;

“park freehold title” has the same meaning as in the Framework Act;

“Park Land Trust” has the same meaning as in the Framework Act.



# Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve

## Joint Management Plan October 2011

WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that the following document contains sensitive cultural information about an Aboriginal Men's sacred site.

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Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve Joint Management Plan

Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory, Department of Natural Resources,  
Environment, The Arts and Sport

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## Executive Summary

Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve is a very small reserve, located about 40 kilometres east of Alice Springs in the East MacDonnell Ranges. The Reserve's primary value is that it supports an Eastern Arrernte men's sacred site. The site remains an important part of the Arrernte's living cultural landscape across the district. Cultural information about the site is tightly restricted to senior male Traditional Owners. The Reserve is jointly managed between Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife.

The main objectives of the Reserve are to protect the sacred site, meet the needs of Traditional Owners to maintain their connection to country and build effective governance which empowers Traditional Owners and successfully manages the Reserve.

To Traditional Owners Corroboree Rock poses spiritual danger to Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men. Accordingly access to the site, as well as information and images need to be carefully managed. Traditional Owners seek to ensure that visitors remain on marked tracks and do not climb the rock.

The Reserve provides limited recreation opportunities for visitors beyond district orientation, and cultural and nature appreciation. The Reserve does not provide any contribution to biodiversity conservation. It will have a very low level of management input and service from park operations. Opportunities do however exist for greater collaboration with adjacent landowners.



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# Vision for the Reserve

## “Working together as one”

Both partners will work together to manage the Reserve with respect and acknowledgment of each others' responsibilities. A strong partnership will mean the sacred site is looked after properly for current and future generations.

## 1. Introduction

Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve is a significant sacred site for Eastern Arrernte people located 42 kilometres east of Alice Springs and covers an area of 7.28 hectares. It features a strikingly shaped dolomite outcrop, in the midst of the East MacDonnell Ranges. It provides a small roadside stop adjacent to the northern side of the sealed Ross Highway (Map 1). Access is via the Ross Highway and approximately 15,000 visitors use the Reserve every year.

In 1962 the Reserve (NT Portion 758) was initially proclaimed Reserve No. 1078 for scenic purposes under Section 103 of the Crown Lands Ordinance and placed under care, control and management of NT Reserves board in 1963. In 1978 the Reserve was declared under section 12 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* (TPWC Act) in Northern Territory and held by the Conservation Land Corporation. The Reserve is surrounded by the Undoolya Pastoral Station (Perpetual Pastoral Lease 771).

In 2003, Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve was included in Schedule 1 of the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*, allowing the Northern Territory and Traditional Owners to enter into formal joint management of the Reserve. In 2009 title was transferred to Pwanye No 2 Aboriginal Land Trust to be held in trust for the Traditional Owners and was leased to the Northern Territory for a term of 99 years.

The site is listed with the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) as a "Recorded Site". Traditional Aboriginal custodians have requested that information recorded about the site continue to remain private and not be made publicly available.

### 1.1 Purpose

#### 1.1.1 Values of the Reserve

The key value for the Reserve is:

- **An Eastern Arrernte men's Sacred Site** - The site is a strikingly shaped dolomite rock outcrop and remains an important part of the Arrernte living cultural landscape.

#### 1.1.2 Purpose of the Reserve

Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve (Map 2) is a place of reverence and will be managed to promote its sacred importance. The priorities are to:

- Protect the Aboriginal sacred site; and
  - Meet the needs of Traditional Owners to maintain their connection to country and be involved in management and on ground operations.
-

### 1.1.3 Purpose of the Plan

This Plan gives direction to the day-to-day management of the Reserve. It also provides the primary source against which management performance will be measured. Management success will be defined by performance measures developed by the Joint Management Partners (see Appendix 1).

This joint management plan supersedes the 1994 Plan of Management. It will remain in effect until amended or replaced by a new plan. Further responsibilities regarding the joint management of the Reserve are set out in the Reserve Lease.

This Plan is closely linked to other joint management plans of the East MacDonnells district including Trepina Gorge Nature Park, N'Dhala Nature Park, Ruby Gap Nature Park and Arltunga Historical Reserve, and should be considered with them.

Similar Joint Management Plans are concurrently being prepared for N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park and Trepina Gorge Nature Park in the East MacDonnells district. These plans have been developed separately for practical and cultural reasons, including restrictions associated with Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve and N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park. However, the joint management plans of the district will operate under the East MacDonnell Joint Management Committee.

This joint management plan was prepared in accordance with, and complies with, the TPWC Act, the Reserve Lease and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) registered with the National Native Title Tribunal pursuant to the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*. The Plan has force in law under the TPWC Act.

The land subject to this Joint Management Plan is NT Portion 758 held by the Pwanye No 2 Aboriginal Land Trust on behalf of Traditional Owners.

## 1.2 Joint Management

Joint Management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service working together, exchanging their knowledge and expertise, solving problems and sharing decisions. Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve is Aboriginal land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) 1976 (Cth) (ALRA)*. Traditional Owners have agreed to lease the land back to the Northern Territory for 99 years and work together to manage the Reserve. The terms of joint management for the Reserve have authority in law under the TPWC Act, the Reserve Lease and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) registered under the *Native Title Act*. This Plan complies with all of these legal instruments.

Under section 25AA of the TPWC Act the joint management partners for Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve are the Territory and the Traditional Owners of the Reserve. The Territory will generally carry out its joint management obligations through the Parks and Wildlife Service. For the purposes of this Joint Management Plan, references to the Parks and Wildlife Service as a Joint Management Partner should be read as including a reference to the Territory.

### 1.2.1 Traditional Owners

Pwanye is the Eastern Arrernte name for the long hill south of the Ross Highway stretching east from the Numery Road turnoff to N'Dhala Gorge; it is also the name traditional owners use to refer to themselves as being part of their country. Neighbouring 'countries' or 'estates' are Antulye to the west, Uytetye to the south, Ulpmmer to the north, Uleralkwe to the east.

Ancestral tracks and song lines traverse these estates, linking Aboriginal people in the region and sometimes, right across the country. Arrernte kin relations, known as anpernirrentye or 'skin names,' allow individuals to be placed in a social framework which guides every person's behaviour to others within that system. Anpernirrentye also incorporates a system of descent and inheritance, where children inherit a skin name in line with their father's anyenhenge (father / child skin names).

People descended from a paternal grandfather and his brothers are referred to as Apmereke-artweye. They are the recognised holders of an estate or country with the right to make decisions affecting the use of that country; the responsibility of looking after that country; and the accountability to the land itself and the spirits of their ancestors still present in the landscape. Traditionally, failure to comply with these responsibilities could result in sickness or death, so that when a person becomes sick, it is often attributed to neglecting their country.

Apmereke-artweye are assisted in their role as owners by their kwertengerle – people who hold a different connection to the same country, often through their mother's father or mother's brother. Kwertengerle can become the holders of knowledge with significant ritual responsibilities and are considered essential partners for discussing any issues affecting that country. Together the Apmereke-artweye and Kwertengerle care for the land, exercising complementary roles and responsibilities. Anthropologists will often refer to this group as the estate group.

There are a number of other factors that play a significant role in assuming positions of authority or seniority within a group related to an estate, principally residence and knowledge of country, aknganeme (conception or 'borning' place), gender and involvement in ritual activity. Personality and level of interest are also relevant factors for the exercise of authority over an estate. These factors are often played out in the secret/sacred arena of traditional ceremony. The recognition of seniority from the broader group is important to consider in the context of joint management.

Traditional Law is transmitted through the dreaming stories of the totemic ancestors, or the Altyerre. Layers of meaning encoded into the stories and songs are gradually revealed at various stages throughout a person's life. Sacred objects, songs, designs and dramatic acts have been left behind by the spirit ancestors to transmit this knowledge. Young children are taught the 'open' or public versions of these stories, and may attend certain stages of some ceremonies. Some men will eventually become akngerrtye (senior men) - a status that is recognised by other members of the group and not one that a person can independently assume. Ceremony is traditionally the arena in which decision-making occurs. These ceremonies are usually held between October and March.

Corroboree Rock is an important men's sacred site and senior men remain responsible for the site and must be involved in any decisions or actions undertaken in the Reserve.

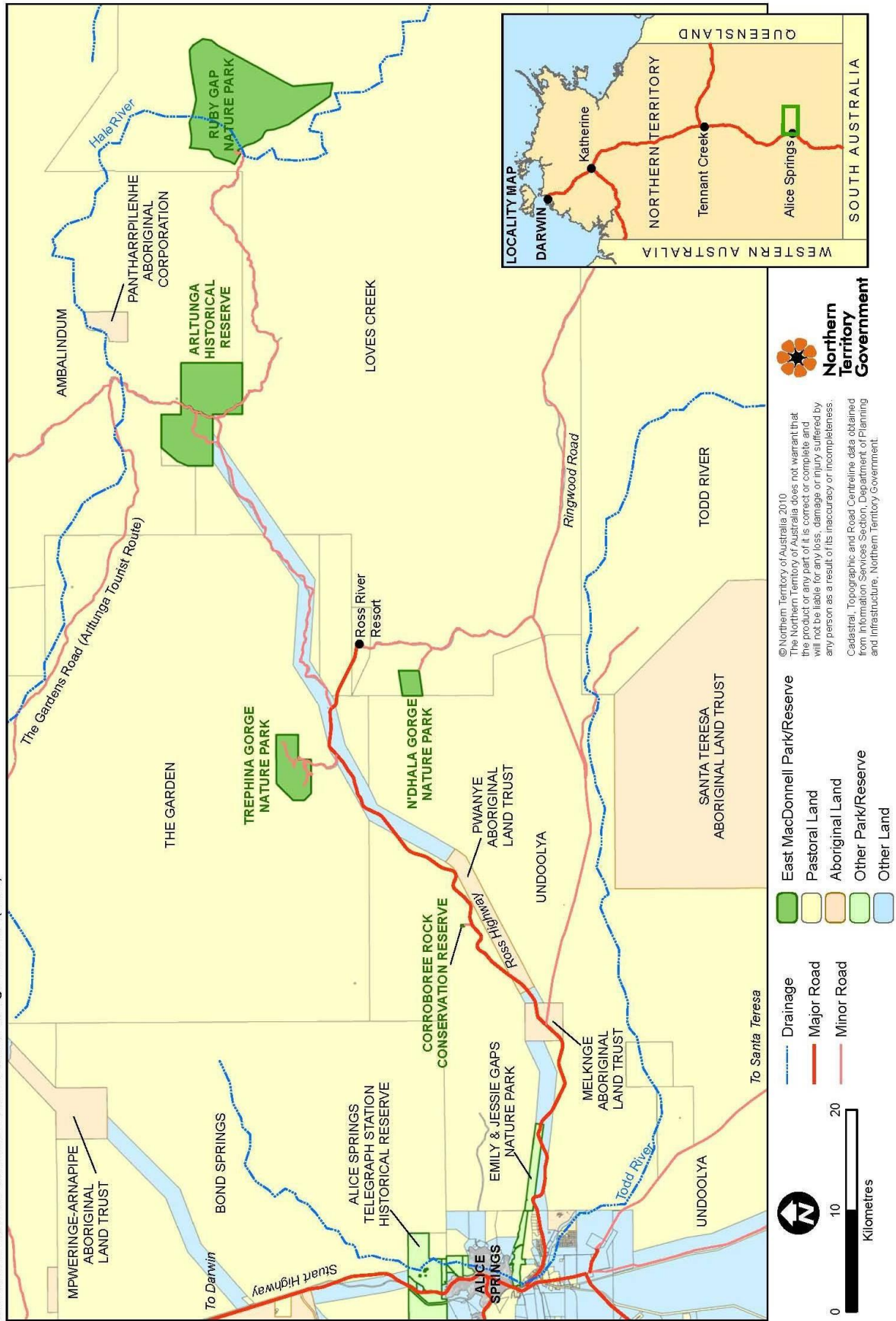
### **1.2.2 The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service**

The Parks and Wildlife Service is dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural values of parks and reserves, while providing high-quality nature-based tourism and recreation opportunities for visitors. The Service is committed to engaging the public and working with the interests of the community. The Parks and Wildlife Service is committed to seeing that the joint management partnership grows and becomes truly equitable and that Traditional Owners benefit culturally, socially and economically from joint management.

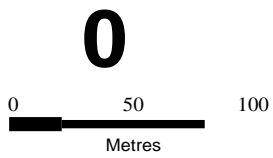
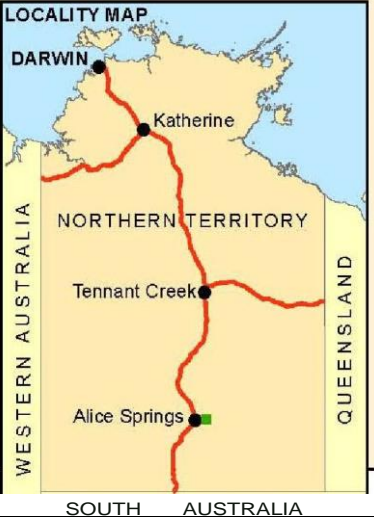
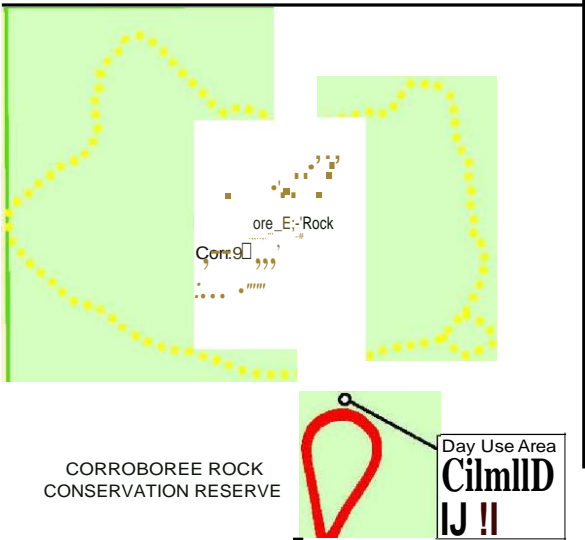
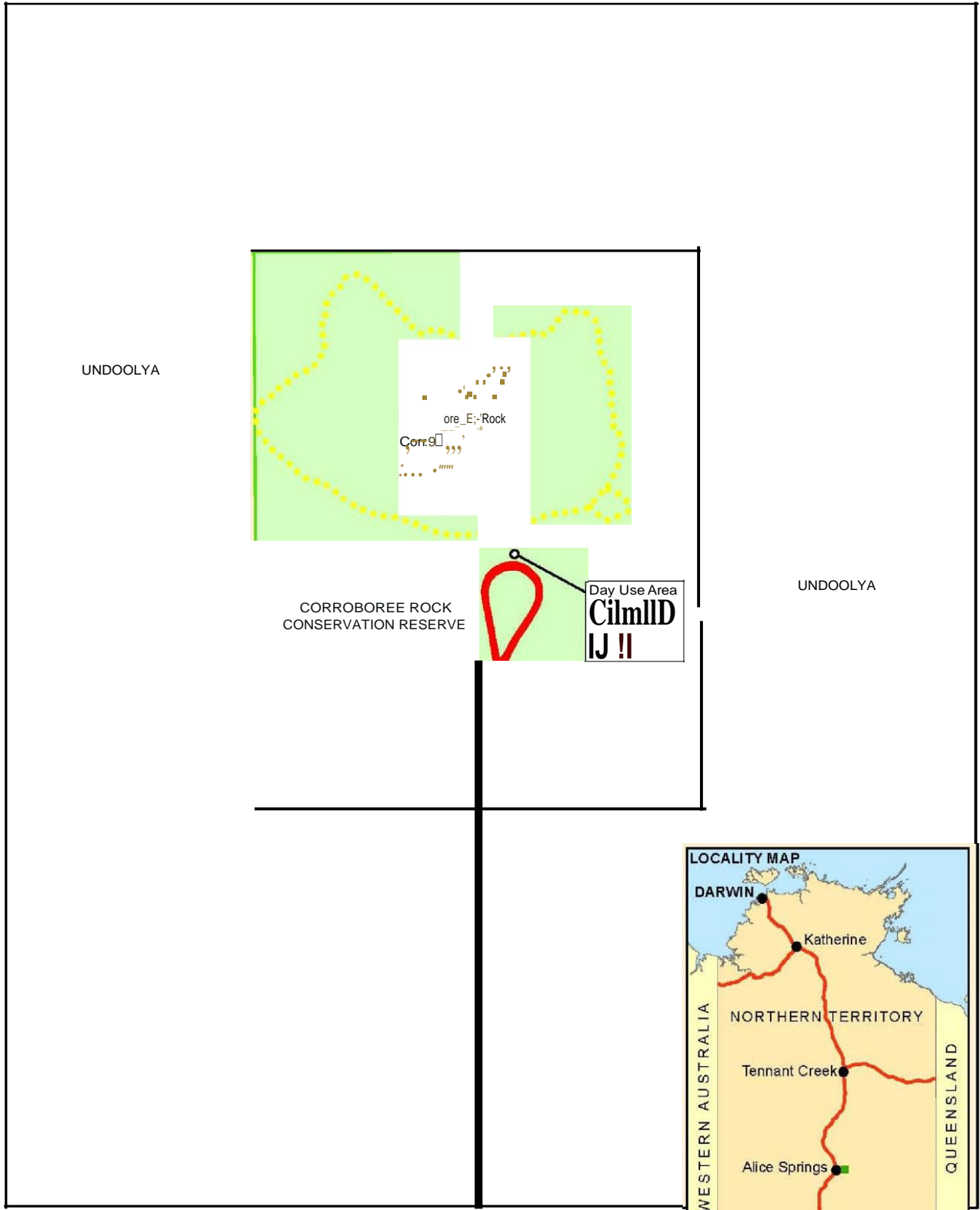
This Plan has been developed by the joint management partners in a positive spirit. Like the Traditional Owners of the Reserve, the Parks and Wildlife Service is optimistic about the future.

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Map 1. Location Map, Parks and Reserves of the East MacDonnell Ranges Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve Joint Management Plan (Draft)



Map 2. Park Map  
 Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve Joint Management Plan (Draft)



- Walking track
- Access Road
- Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve
- [ii] Parking Area
- m Toilets
- m Picnic Facilities
- IJ Short Walks
- !I No Camping

The Northern Territory of Australia does not warrant that the product or any part of it is correct or complete. It will not be liable for any loss, or suffered by any of incompleteness.



## 2. Reserve Governance

Joint management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service working together to achieve their shared goals and aspirations, exchanging knowledge and expertise solving problems together and sharing decisions. A mutual understanding of country, Law, culture and Indigenous decision-making principles are fundamental to making good joint management decisions. For the purpose of joint management, the term governance is defined as “the way the partners organise themselves and the rules they put in place to realise their shared vision.” It includes all aspects of partnership, communication, planning and decision-making.

Making sure that the joint management partners have a clear structure and process for making decisions is essential for good joint management. The partners are optimistic that this new way of learning and working together will improve management equity. Both partners acknowledge that it will take time and support to build capacity and a strong working relationship.

### Principles for effective governance

- Decision-making and accountability should be equally shared.
- Time spent together on country is important for developing mutual trust, respect and understanding between the partners.
- Indigenous decision-making processes must be respected.
- Management priorities will be guided by the Reserve’s key values.
- Planning and decision-making must incorporate risk identification and minimisation.
- Engagement and employment of Traditional Owners in management operations is central to joint management success.
- Resources are limited and must be used effectively.
- Joint management has to be checked to see that it is working well. It is important to keep improving.
- Public support for joint management is very important.

### 2.1 Planning and decision-making

#### 2.1.1 A partnership approach

Joint management provides exciting new opportunities to make better management decisions based on a combination of Indigenous and western approaches to land management. Successful joint management relies on meaningful engagement of Traditional Owners and will be measured against the achievement of the aims in this Plan and the satisfaction of the joint management partners.

Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve is an important sacred site. It is essential that senior men need to be involved in decisions involving this Reserve. The Central Land Council (CLC) will facilitate this process.

It is also important to acknowledge that Traditional Owners’ values and perceptions in relation to looking after country do not always line up with conventional management approaches. Respecting these differences will significantly assist the partnership and

provides the basis for effective joint management and governance of the Reserve.

### 2.1.2 Roles and responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities are essential for joint management and each of the partners have responsibilities for looking after the Reserve in accordance with traditional Aboriginal laws and laws applicable in the Northern Territory (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

- A **Joint Management Committee** is intended to be the principal governing body for parks and reserves of the East MacDonnells district, including N'Dhala Gorge and Trepkina Gorge Nature Parks. The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee's primary functions are to provide strategic direction to Park operations, determine local policy and procedures, and review progress against management directions in this plan. The Committee will be composed of representatives nominated by the main Traditional Owner families and senior Parks and Wildlife staff. It is hoped that centralising management between all reserves of the East MacDonnells to a single Joint Management Committee will increase management efficiency and effectiveness across the district.
- **Traditional Owners** are responsible to the land, law and culture. Senior men provide direction and management of the site. They retain special responsibilities for decision-making and oversee cultural protocols for the sacred site. They are responsible for managing traditional knowledge and passing it on to the right people, maintaining the sacred site and keeping the country alive.
- The **Parks and Wildlife Service** is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Reserve under the direction of the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee. The Parks and Wildlife Service is required to finance and resource the Reserve's ongoing management including administrative functions, staffing, infrastructure and services in accordance with the Reserve Lease, Indigenous Land Use Agreement and any relevant laws. Parks and Wildlife employees are responsible to the Minister for Parks and Wildlife and the Northern Territory Government.
- The **Central Land Council** (CLC) has an important role in assisting joint management. The TPWC Act defines the CLC's role as representing and protecting the interests of the Traditional Owners in relation to the Reserve's management. Specifically they are to represent and support Traditional Owners' interests, undertake consultations, assist with monitoring joint management processes, and help resolve differences between Traditional Owners, if needed.

All joint management decisions will be consistent with any relevant laws in force in the Northern Territory, with the Reserve Lease and Indigenous Land Use Agreement, and with any relevant Northern Territory Government policies or guidelines.

### 2.1.3 Building effective governance and continuous improvement

Joint management provides opportunities to make better management decisions based on a combination of indigenous and western approaches. A positive working relationship based on mutual understanding and respect is essential for joint management to work.

Working in a cross-cultural environment requires clear communication at all levels. Respecting differences and a commitment to understanding each other's views will make for a strong relationship and provide the basis for effective joint management and governance.

The partners recognise the need for training to build effective governance across the district. Traditional Owners are willing to teach Rangers and visitors cross-cultural skills, language and their understanding of country. Rangers are prepared to share their

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knowledge of planning, budgeting, organisational structures and resource management with Traditional Owners.

The partners are also committed to continuous learning and improvement. The process involves tracking progress against performance measures, evaluating results and purposely modifying management to reflect new knowledge and insights (see Appendix 1). It also involves monitoring to measure efficiencies, effectiveness and progress toward long-term aims.

**Table 1.** Decision-making framework.

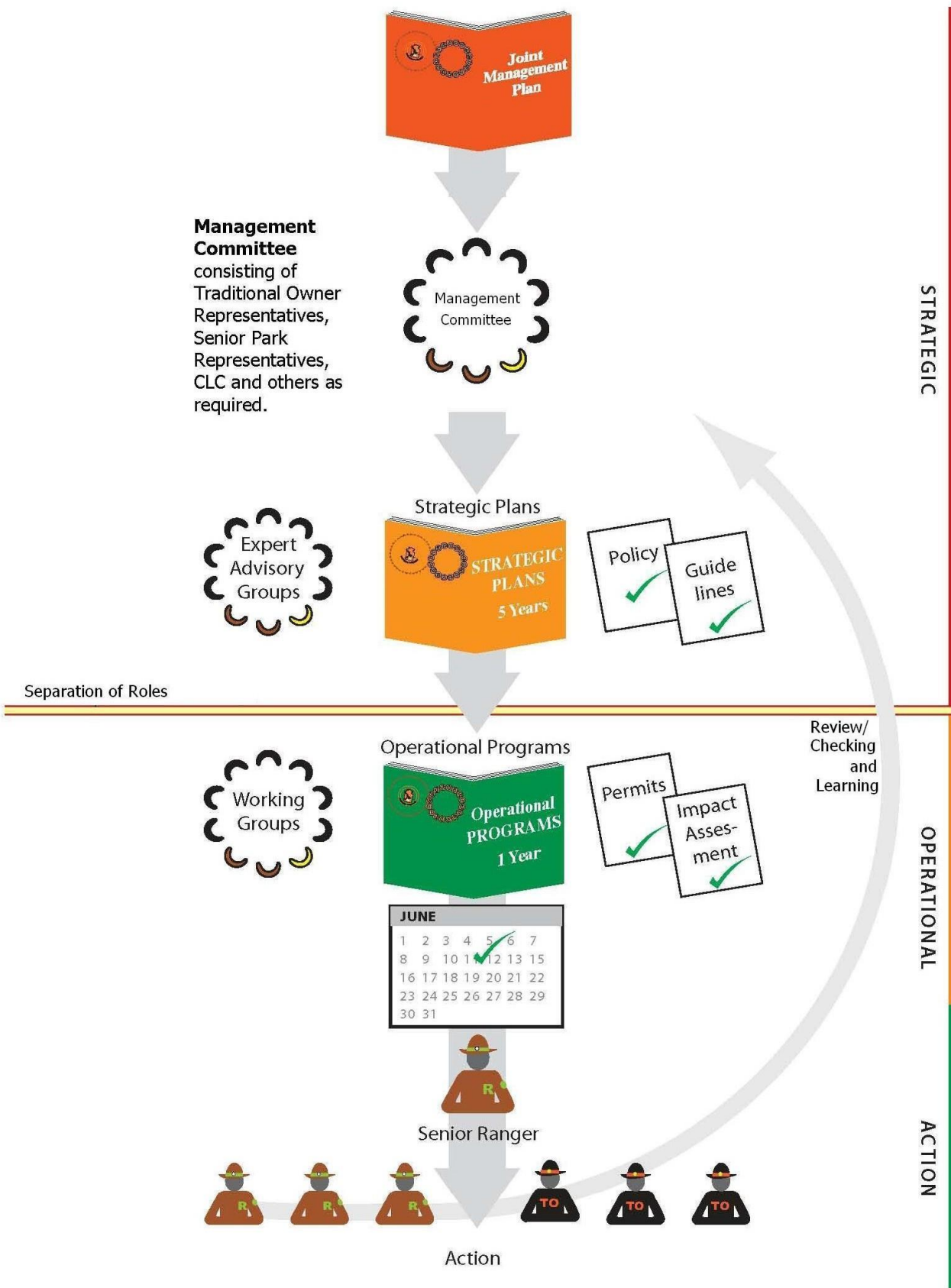
East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee Representatives from Traditional Owners and Senior Parks and Wildlife Staff	Park Operations Parks Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise executive authority and be accountable for the management of the Reserve.</li> <li>• Set strategic direction and park-specific policy and procedure for management programs and staff to implement.</li> <li>• Approve work programs and internal annual budgets.</li> <li>• Establish development direction and criteria to evaluate proposals.</li> <li>• Consult with senior men responsible for the sacred site.</li> <li>• Communicate with, and provide feedback from, the groups that members represent.</li> <li>• Provide a link with the key stakeholders and wider community for the East MacDonnell district.</li> <li>• Monitor and review management performance.</li> <li>• Consider other proposals not specified in this plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for day-to-day management of the Reserve.</li> <li>• Implement operational programs, policy and procedure as approved by the management committee.</li> <li>• Maximise on-ground participation of Traditional Owners in management of the Reserve.</li> <li>• Report progress to the management committee.</li> <li>• Liaise with stakeholders and neighbours.</li> <li>• Issue permits, contracts and licenses according to policy and procedures.</li> <li>• Monitor management effectiveness and adjust management according to new information, improved procedures, new technology and new threats or issues.</li> </ul>

### 2.1.4 Community engagement and participation

Good working relationships with landholders situated between the parks and reserves of the East MacDonnells should increase management effectiveness across the district. While senior men are obligated to keep the stories for site secret, they still want to promote the importance of the site and their culture.

There are no immediate proposals to expand the Reserve. The vision of a “greater park” linking the West MacDonnell National Park, Trepina Gorge Nature Park and N’Dhala Gorge Nature Park has been investigated from time to time over the last three decades. Such a vision may become a reality in time through co-operative arrangements with neighbouring landholders such as Undoolya, The Garden and Loves Creek Stations.

**Figure 1. Park Management and Operations – Roles and Responsibilities**



## **Aim**

- Equitable management partnership with effective governance that makes well-informed decisions.

## **Management Directions**

**2.1 Joint Management Committee** – A single Joint Management Committee will oversee operational management of parks and reserves in the East MacDonnell district, including N'Dhala Gorge and Trephina Nature Parks. For matters that directly relate to Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve, the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee must consult with senior men responsible for the site.

- **Role** - The role of the East MacDonnells Management Committee is to provide direction and policy. The Committee will not have a direct role in day-to-day operations. The Committee will represent the interests of Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife. As an initial priority, the partners will formally define and document all aspects of their roles, as well as the rules and processes to effectively govern the Reserve.
- **Meetings** - The East MacDonnells Management Committee will meet at least once a year.
- **Membership** – The Committee will consist of at least three Traditional Owners representing estate groups associated with nominated parks and reserves of the East MacDonnell district;
  - at least two Senior Government Officers;
  - at least one Land Council Officer, and
  - other persons invited by the partners to provide advice on particular issues or to represent community interests (for example the tourism industry).

**2.2 Making decisions** – Decisions will be made by consensus. The roles and decision-making responsibilities of the East MacDonnells Management Committee are summarised in Table 1.

**2.3 Expert advisory groups and working groups** – Working groups of Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife staff, CLC officers and specialists may be formed to support the Committee or address specific tasks, such as for fire management, interpretation or tourism.

**2.4 Supporting and building effective governance** - The partners and CLC recognise that joint management will be a process of continuous learning and improvement. In the future, governance arrangements may be refined to increase effectiveness.

- **Representation** - The CLC will represent and support Traditional Owners' interests and facilitate consultations when required.
- **Governance training** – Governance training will be provided to the joint management partners to give them the tools and skills to work effectively in the partnership, with attention given to needs identified by the participatory monitoring and evaluation program.
- **Professional development** – Professional standards and staff competencies will be supported by ongoing training in all aspects of Reserve management with special emphasis on cross-cultural training involving Traditional Owners.
- **Information exchange** – A key role of committee members will be to bring to the Committee the collective expertise, interests and concerns of their group. Committee members will be responsible for passing on information to the wider Traditional Owner group, local community and key stakeholders. The CLC will provide support if required.

Park operations will be responsible for effectively communicating information about Reserve management programs to the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee.

- **Continuous learning and improvement** – A monitoring and evaluation program will be developed and will inform actions to develop effective governance. Performance will be measured annually using indicators (see Appendix 1) relating to:
  - The satisfaction of the partners;
  - The effectiveness of the partnership (including decision-making processes, participation and communication); and
  - The implementation of this Plan
- **Dispute resolution** – The partners will aim to resolve disputes through open discussion and communication, involving the CLC as required or requested by the Traditional Owners. However, should a dispute arise between the partners that cannot be resolved, the parties will follow the dispute resolution processes set out in the Reserve Lease.

## 2.2 Business Operations

### 2.2.1 Effective operations

Park operations are currently carried out by Park Rangers based at Trepkina Gorge Nature Park with regular patrols to the Park. It is hoped that day-to-day management will be carried out by both Rangers and Traditional Owners in the future. At present almost all funding to manage the Reserve is provided by the Northern Territory Government from funding appropriated to manage the Northern Territory's Parks estate. Major works and ongoing programs are subject to Territory-wide government priorities.

On-ground work in parks and reserves across the East MacDonnells is directed by a hierarchy of strategies and operational programs that are developed to achieve the long-term aims included in this and related Plans. The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee will be responsible for endorsing long-term strategies and overseeing operational programs implemented by Rangers, Traditional Owners, contractors and volunteers. The Committee's role will be to match priorities and new information with available staff and budgets to best achieve the Reserve's long-term aims and vision.

### 2.2.2 Indigenous training, employment and enterprise development

Joint management will promote opportunities for employment and business for Traditional Owners across the East MacDonnell district. Traditional Owners emphasise how important training and employment is for their families and acknowledge their responsibility to support young people.

Since the establishment of new joint management arrangements in the East MacDonnells, Traditional Owners have participated in paid management programs on a flexible basis. Such flexible, project-based employment provides many benefits including work experience, skills exchange and accredited training, and helps build positive working relationships between Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife staff. Where necessary, it helps Traditional Owners become work-ready and local Aboriginal organisations, including community ranger groups, contract-ready.

Traditional Owners are keen to be involved in contract work. Preference will be given to Traditional Owners of the Reserve to participate in any commercial activities approved under the lease, subject to any law in force in the Northern Territory. Where capacity is

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lacking, the partners will work with local Aboriginal people to build confidence, provide exposure, knowledge and opportunities to gain experience.

Access by Aboriginal Rangers, contractors and trainees to the sacred site should be carefully managed under the direction of senior men.

### 2.2.3 Regulated activities

**Permits** – All commercial operations, tours, commercial film and photography, public events, public gatherings, interfere with or take wildlife, and special access are regulated within the Reserve and require a permit under the TPWC By-laws. Permit holders must abide by the conditions on each permit so that the values of the Reserve are not negatively affected.

**Permit approval** – An effective permit processing system is needed to assess permit applications submitted to Parks and Wildlife. The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee will establish local policy and guidelines for park operations to issue permits, subject to the provisions of the TPWC Act and TPWC By-laws. The partners will need to have regard to timeliness of processing, the interests of Traditional Owners, the community, industry stakeholders and existing Parks and Wildlife policy. Such guidelines should also explicitly state when a proposed activity will, and will not, require consultation with Traditional Owners. The rights, obligations and conditions of permit holders are usually specified in the permit and will be consistent with conditions determined by the partners. Some permits may require paid supervision by Traditional Owners or Parks and Wildlife staff. The CLC will consult with Traditional Owners on permit applications that request any access or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors until any necessary agreed guidelines and procedures are developed.

**Tour operator permits** – Tour companies visiting any Northern Territory park or reserve require a permit issued under the TPWC By-laws. Most tour operator permits are addressed through the Tour Operator Permit System. If special provisions are needed a separate permit is required, with the operators rights, obligations and conditions usually detailed in the permit. Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife want information presented by tour operators to be accurate and appropriate, particularly for cultural information.

**Promotion, commercial film and photography** - Corroboree Rock is a restricted men's sacred site. Images or representations of Corroboree Rock should not be publicly presented. Senior men have requested that commercial film and photography of the site should not be approved.

**Research** - Any wildlife research proposals should be developed in conjunction with Parks and Wildlife staff and Traditional Owners and be consistent with Reserve policies and guidelines including ICIP (see Management Direction 4.1). Also wildlife research requires a permit to interfere with, take or keep wildlife.

**Development proposals** – All development proposals need to be reviewed against guidelines and conditions prepared by the partners. Where development proposals, leases or activities may cause environmental, heritage or cultural impacts, the proponent will be required to demonstrate that the proposal complies with all relevant legislation. The proposal will also require the informed consent of Traditional Owners.

**Benefit sharing agreements** - With the consideration of the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee and consent of all affected Traditional Owners, the Reserve Lease and this Plan allow the partners to enter into benefit-sharing arrangements with commercial partners.

**Licence or sub-lease** – In certain circumstances, including where a secure form of land tenure is needed, a licence or sub-lease may be entered into. Any licence or sublease

entered into by the Northern Territory in respect of the Reserve must be consistent with the terms of the Reserve Lease and must have the prior written consent of the Pwanye No 2 Aboriginal Land Trust on behalf of the Traditional Owners.

**Protecting sacred sites** – Protection for places of cultural significance to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory is afforded under overlapping legislation. The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* (ALRA) gives legal recognition to areas which that Act terms 'sacred sites', defined as: "a site that is sacred to Aboriginals or is otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal tradition, and includes any land that, under a law of the Northern Territory, is declared to be sacred to Aboriginals or of significance according to Aboriginal tradition". The *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* (NTASSA) also provides protection for sites that fall within the scope of the ALRA definition of sacred site. Both the ALRA and NTASSA make it an offence to enter or remain on land that is a sacred site. It is also an offence under the NTASSA to carry out work on, use or desecrate a sacred site. Further, the NTASSA provides protection for sacred sites by requiring a person who proposes to use or conduct work on land to apply for an Authority Certificate. An Authority Certificate will only be issued if the use of or work on the land can proceed without there being a substantive risk of damage to or interference with a sacred site on or in the vicinity of the land or if an agreement is reached between the applicant and the custodians of the sacred site. Subject to the terms of the NTASSA, this protection enables custodians of the sacred site to say who can enter the site and what can happen in or on the site.

Successful joint management will assist to ensure Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve is protected in accordance with the wishes of the traditional owners. Pursuant to the ALRA, the Central Land Council has a specific function to assist Aboriginals in the taking of measures likely to assist in the protection of sacred sites within the Reserve.

**Protecting heritage sites** - The *Heritage Conservation Act* provides protection for two categories of places and objects. Firstly, it provides for the protection of prescribed archaeological places and objects,' which include, among other things; places containing rock paintings or carvings, prehistoric or proto-historic occupation places; places containing human remains or burial artefacts; art sites, cultural objects and wood carvings. Under the *Heritage Conservation Act* consent of the Minister is required before work is carried out on or in relation to an archaeological place or object. Further, the *Heritage Conservation Act* also provides for the protection and conservation of declared heritage places and objects.

Under the *Heritage Conservation Regulations* a person who discovers an archaeological place or object must report the discovery and its location to the Director as soon as practicable after discovering it. In addition to this obligation, the Traditional Owners request that if any artefacts are uncovered they are not disturbed and are immediately reported to the senior men through the Central Land Council.

**Proposals for expansion of the Reserve** – There are no immediate proposals to expand the Reserve. The vision of a "greater park" linking the West MacDonnell National Park and parks and reserves of the East MacDonnell ranges has been investigated from time to time over several decades. There are opportunities to build links between protected areas of the East MacDonnells through cooperative arrangements with nearby landholders.

**Community living areas** in the district are an integral part of both the continuation of Aboriginal cultural practices in, and the natural and cultural resource management of the country. Traditional Owners have achieved legal ownership of small land parcels in proximity of the Reserve through the *Pastoral Land Act*.

**Mining** – The Reserve is small and any mining or extractive activities would adversely impact the sites cultural values. Under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* Traditional Owners have the right to control mining on Aboriginal Land.

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Currently, Traditional Owners feel strongly that mining is not consistent with the values of the Reserve and are unlikely to approve it.

**Dealing with proposals not in the Plan** – Any proposal not addressed in the Plan will be initially considered by the partners through the East MacDonnell Joint Management Committee. Any matter that may affect the interests of Traditional Owners will require the consent of affected Traditional Owners via a consultation process conducted by the CLC.

#### **Aims**

- The Aims and Directions in this Plan achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities; and
- Traditional Owners benefiting economically through joint management.

#### **Management Directions**

**2.5 Management strategies and operational programs** –The partners will prepare and implement integrated management strategies and operational programs for parks and reserves of the East MacDonnells district, including N'Dhala Gorge and Trepshina Gorge Nature Parks.

**2.6 Day-to-day management** – Parks and Wildlife will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Reserve.

- **Financing** – Parks and Wildlife will finance and resource the Reserve's ongoing management including administrative functions, staff, infrastructure and services taking into account the funding available to the Service and the priorities determined across the NT.

**2.7 Work experience, training and employment** – The partners will commit to building capacity, employment and career development opportunities for Traditional Owners of the East MacDonnells.

- **Indigenous Training and Employment Strategy** - This strategy will be prepared at an agency level to maximise Aboriginal employment. This strategy will inform initiatives to increase the employment of Aboriginal people in the district. Aboriginal employment will remain a standing item at East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee meetings.
- **Indigenous employment opportunities in Parks and Wildlife** –Parks and Wildlife will continue to provide opportunities for work experience, training, casual work and direct employment of Aboriginal people from the east MacDonnell district where possible. Steps will be put in place to facilitate the uptake of higher level positions including Rangers, managers, technical, administrative and professional specialist positions subject to any applicable laws or policies in force in the Territory.
- **Partnerships with community-based Indigenous Rangers and special interest groups** – Local Indigenous Community-based Rangers, community volunteers, and sponsored training and employment programs will be encouraged to assist with Reserve management.
- **Contract services** – Parks and Wildlife will encourage private sector participation. Initiatives to build the capacity of Aboriginal organisations to fulfil works and service contracts will be encouraged. Preference will be given to Traditional Owners of the Reserve participating in any commercial activities conducted under the lease subject to any law in force in the Territory. If other contractors are used, those providing training and employment to local Aboriginal people will be preferred.

**2.8 Tourism** – The partners will liaise with the tourism industry through established fora and organisations. Sustainable cultural and nature-based tourism will be fostered.

**2.9 Cultural advice** – Traditional Owners will be paid for specialist cultural advice and supervision consistent with the Parks and Wildlife Indigenous Fee for Service Policy.

### **2.10 Regulated Activities**

- **Permit Policy and Guidelines** – The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee will establish local guidelines and conditions for the issue of permits, subject to the provisions of the TPWC Act and TPWC By-laws. These will consider the interests of Traditional Owners, industry needs and Parks and Wildlife policy. In the absence of guidelines, the CLC will consult with Traditional Owners over permit applications and advise Parks and Wildlife when appropriate.
- **Commercial Film and Photography** - Because of the high spiritual importance of the site the partners will not consent to any commercial publication or broadcasting of images or film of the sacred site. Cultural restrictions will be communicated through site interpretation and the Departmental website.
- **Standard permit applications** – Delegated Parks and Wildlife staff can approve permit applications that involve activities or commercial concessions which comply with agreed guidelines and conditions, require no special access, and are of a nature or type that has already been considered by the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee.
- **Non-standard permit applications** – Consultation with senior men may be required to provide direction to Park operations if a permit application involves special access or activities not addressed by agreed guidelines or conditions. A permit holder's rights, obligations and conditions will be detailed in conditions or operational agreements attached to the permit.
- **Routine commercial tours** – Permits for tour businesses making normal use of the Reserve will continue to be issued through the Tour Operator Permit System.
- **Special events** – Because of the spiritual importance of the site the partners will not consent to proposals for special events within the Reserve.
- **Research** – Wildlife researchers require permits to interfere with, take or keep wildlife. Parks and Wildlife staff and Traditional Owners should be consulted in developing research proposals and proposals should be consistent with TPWC By-laws, Park policies and guidelines including ICIP (see Management Direction 4.1).

**2.11 Development proposals** – Any proposal will require informed consent of affected Traditional Owners, consistent with the Reserve Lease and appropriate assessment processes.

- **Impact assessment** - The potential impacts of all proposed activities and developments will be considered and assessed commensurate with the scale of potential impact.
  - **Benefit-sharing agreements** – The partners may enter into benefit-sharing arrangements for commercial operations and developments within the Reserve.
  - **Infrastructure sublease** – With approval of affected Traditional Owners, consistent with the Reserve Lease and appropriate assessment processes, this Plan provides the Territory Government the right to sub-lease or license portions of the Reserve for specific purposes, including public infrastructure.
  - **Sacred sites clearances** –The Central Land Council will have sacred site clearance responsibility for all proposed work on the Reserve. However the joint management partners may agree from time to time that a proponent may require an Authority Certificate under the NTASSA, issued by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.
-

- **Heritage approvals** – Consent will be sought under the *Heritage Conservation Act* for works to prescribed Aboriginal Archaeological Places and Objects in the Reserve, historical sites and any significant development involving land disturbance. Sacred site clearances through the Central Land Council will also be sought for works to any archaeological sites within the Reserve.
  - **Cultural objects** - All archaeological materials are protected and must not be disturbed. A person who discovers an archaeological place or object must report the discovery to the NT Department responsible for environment and heritage. Traditional Owners also request that if any artefacts are immediately reported to the senior men through the Central Land Council.
- 2.12 Extending the Reserve** – Any proposals to extend the Reserve by inclusion of adjoining land will be considered by the partners through the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee.
- 2.13 Establishing new community living areas** - Any proposal to create community living areas on the Reserve will be considered by the partners through the East MacDonnells Joint Management.
- 2.14 Mining and exploration** –Mining applications will be addressed through the ALRA. Fossicking will not be permitted.
- 2.15 Dealing with proposals not in the Plan** – Any proposal not addressed in the Plan will be initially considered by the partners through the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee. Any matter that may affect the interests of Traditional Owners will require the consent of affected Traditional Owners via a consultation process conducted by the CLC.

## 3. Zoning

The Reserve is managed for multiple purposes and different areas of the Reserve will be managed differently. The zoning plan is a general summary of the purpose and focus of management for all areas of the Reserve, based on the specific values of those areas and their level of visitor access and facility development.

### Aim

- Reserve values protected whilst providing for public access and enjoyment.

### Management Directions

**3.1 Zoning** – Management of the Reserve will be in accordance with the zoning scheme (Table 2, Map 3).

**3.2 Development** - Regardless of the designated zone all management and development will maintain the Reserve's natural character and conservation values. Any new development will be subject to approval of the partners and appropriate environmental, sacred site and cultural heritage protection legislation.

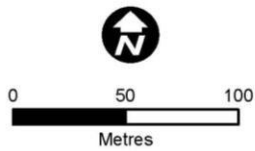
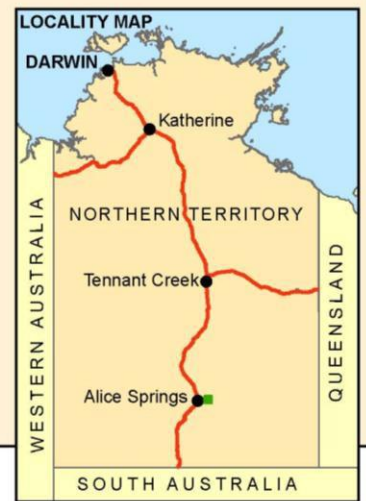
**3.3 Special Protection Zone** – To protect sites of exceptional conservation or cultural significance from threatening processes, special protection zones can be designated by the Committee in consultation with stakeholders.

**Table 2.** Zoning Scheme.

	<b>Visitor Zone</b>	<b>Special Protection Zone</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Concentrated visitor use whilst minimising negative impacts.	Protection of the sacred site.
<b>Management Focus</b>	Basic standard facilities and interpretation.	Protection of the sacred site.
<b>Visitor Access</b>	Basic standard access for conventional vehicles. Basic standard pedestrian access.	No camping. Visitor access controlled if necessary.
<b>Visitor Activity</b>	District orientation and basic interpretation, picnicking, walking, photography and nature appreciation.	Cultural appreciation.
<b>Facilities</b>	Parking area, walking track, picnic facilities, shade shelter, interpretive signs, toilet and emergency facilities if needed.	Facilities necessary to ensure protection of the site ie. fences, vehicle barriers, interpretation.



Map 3. Zoning Map  
 Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve Joint Management Plan (Draft)



- Zoning Scheme**
- Visitor Zone
  - Special Protection Zone
  - Walking track
  - Access Road
  - Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve
- P Parking Area
  - ♿ Toilets
  - 🍷 Picnic Facilities
  - 🚶 Short Walks
  - 🚫 No Camping

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## 4. Managing Country

Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve is a small reserve (7.28 ha) that significantly contributes to the Arrernte's living cultural landscape. While the Reserve itself is an important sacred site its contribution to conservation in the context of the National Reserve System is negligible.

Joint management brings a new way of looking at managing country. Under customary law, Aboriginal people and land are seen as one, and country is defined by sites and dreamings. Senior men of Corroboree Rock have an obligation to maintain the integrity of the site.

Park Rangers respect Traditional Owners reverence for the site. Caring for country in a joint management context requires cross-cultural awareness to ensure that Corroboree Rock is looked after consistent with the site's spiritual importance.

### Principles for Managing Country

- Managing country means managing natural and cultural values together.
- Management should protect and enhance Reserve values.
- Management of Indigenous cultural knowledge is the responsibility of Traditional Owners.
- Adverse impacts of visitors, wildfire, weeds, feral animals and erosion should be minimised.

### 4.1 Cultural Heritage Values

**4.1.1 An Eastern Arrernte men's sacred site** – For Traditional Owners Corroboree Rock, or Alharrkentye, has always been known as a dangerous place visited only by senior men with special responsibilities. The site represents part of a broader complex landscape of spiritual significance. With the passing of time and the proximity of the Ross Highway, Traditional Owners now accept visitors to the site. They wish that visitors respect the site and acknowledge the importance of the area. The site is a recorded sacred site under the *Northern Territory Sacred Sites Act*. It is important to Traditional Owners that the rock is protected from carving, painting, graffiti or other disturbances. One of the highest priorities for Traditional Owners is to discourage visitors climbing through the "window" in the rock formation.

**Cultural Restrictions** - The site poses spiritual danger to Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men and senior men feel a strong responsibility to ensure observance of rules that keep forces in check. Visitors ignoring these concerns cause them alarm and distress.

**Aboriginal knowledge** - Traditional Owners hold accumulated knowledge spanning thousands of years that will continue to inform and inspire future generations. Recording cultural heritage, particularly oral stories is a priority for senior men.

The joint management partners acknowledge that cultural knowledge belongs to the Traditional Owners and will not use, or permit to be used, such knowledge without the prior consent of the Traditional Owners. Wherever possible, the partners will assist the

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Traditional Owners assert their intellectual property rights.

## 4.2 Natural Heritage Values

**Geology** - The Reserve's landscape is dominated by the strikingly shaped dolomite outcrop of Corroboree Rock, which rises approximately 15 metres from the plain. The rugged East MacDonnell Ranges to the north, low ridges to the south and other rocky outcrops in the vicinity of the Reserve form a dramatic visual backdrop.

Corroboree Rock is an upstanding remnant of vertically bedded Bitter Springs Formation dolomite, which overlies the Heavitree Quartzite that forms the ridges of the MacDonnell Ranges.

**Soils** - The environment surrounding Corroboree Rock is fragile. The soils present a moderate water erosion risk and a low wind erosion risk. The surface readily pulverises under traffic and becomes susceptible to rilling or sheet erosion. Eroded areas are difficult to revegetate because the soils are shallow.

**Vegetation** – Whilst Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve lies within the internationally significant MacDonnell Bioregion its conservation value is negligible due to its small size. The vegetation in the Reserve is dominated by open Eucalyptus woodland of *E. socialis* (Red Mallee) and *E. opaca* (Bloodwood) with scattered *Acacia estrophiolata* (Ironwood) and a Spinifex (*Triodia* species) dominated understorey.

The local plants and animals are significant to the sacred site. Senior men request that vegetation of the site is protected from damage and firewood is not to be collected within the Reserve. The long-term fire management goal in the Reserve is protecting vegetation associated with the sacred site requiring fire break maintenance, occasional prescribed burns and weed spraying. It is important for senior men to be involved in fire planning, weed control and burning.

### Aims

- Traditional Owners satisfied with their involvement, fulfilment of their cultural responsibilities and protection of the sacred site.

### Management Directions

#### 4.1 District operational strategies (5 year) and annual operational programs (1 yr) –

Any fire, weed, feral animal and erosion work carried out on the Reserve will be directed through district operational strategies developed with Traditional Owners. They will include all parks of the East MacDonnell district and be prepared approximately every 5 years. Annual operational programs implement the strategies and need only be brief documents specifying the inputs and outputs needed to meet defined strategic targets.

The operational management priorities for Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve is maintain the cultural integrity and protection of the sacred site.

- **Oral histories and Indigenous knowledge** – is a high priority for senior men to record their knowledge to strengthen their responsibilities and continue their traditions.
- **Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)** – Cultural knowledge will not be used, or permitted to be used without the prior consent of the Traditional Owners. Wherever possible, the partners will assist the Traditional Owners assert their intellectual property rights, consistent with standard policies developed and agreed by the CLC and Parks and Wildlife.

**4.2 A culturally sensitive site** – Park operations will uphold restrictions and guidelines for sacred sites or culturally sensitive areas of the Reserve as directed by senior men or

the Central Land Council as their representative. Any management activity on or near the sacred sites will be planned and implemented with senior men.

- **Warning signs** - Warning signs will be presented at the entrance of the Reserve explaining the area is an important men's sacred site with significant cultural restrictions.

**4.3 Sacred site clearances** – see Management Direction 2.11

**4.4 Cultural heritage approval** – see Management Direction 2.11

**4.5 Cultural objects** - see Management Direction 2.11

**4.6 Fire management**- Fuel loads around the cultural site and visitor infrastructure susceptible to fire will be reduced and strategic fire breaks will be maintained within the Reserve.

**4.7 Soil conservation** — will aim to minimise disturbance to Reserve soils. Degraded areas in the Reserve will be identified and progressively rehabilitated using specialist advice.

- **Extraction** - soil, gravel or rocks will not be removed or disturbed except subject to the approval of the partners and as per the conditions of a Sacred Site Clearance, Heritage approval and a permit issued under the TPWC By-laws as necessary

## 5. Managing Visitors

Corroboree Rock is a very small reserve in the East MacDonnells district. It represents an example of Northern Territory's rich and living cultural landscape. Most visitors enjoy the Reserve within an hour and it receives approximately 15,000 people each year. Considering the cultural significance of the site, visitor management should focus on maintaining the integrity and respectful presentation of the site.

### Principles for Managing Visitors

The joint management partners of Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve recognise:

- Positive experiences produce satisfied visitors, who may build a sense of connection and respect for the country.
- Well designed facilities help protect Reserve values and promote safe, enjoyable visitor experiences.

### 5.1 Engaging with the Arrernte's living cultural landscape

Corroboree Rock is a place of reverence and spiritual connection for Traditional Owners. In connection with other reserves there is an opportunity to promote awareness of the Eastern Arrernte's living cultural values across the district. However because of the nature and importance of Corroboree Rock all cultural information is restricted to senior men. Traditional Owners do want to share this important place with the wider community. They hope that by encouraging visitors to the site that non-Aboriginal people will gain a better appreciation of its importance and respect for its traditions.

The partners are keen to improve the presentation of the Reserve while carefully

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managing information presented to the public. The partners hope that visitors will be left with a lasting impression of the importance of Corroboree Rock as a sacred site.

**Access** - A sealed road leads visitors from the Ross Highway to the Reserve. All vehicles should be restricted to sealed road and car park to avoid damage to the fragile environment at the site.

Traditional Owners strongly discourage Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men from entering the Reserve. Warning signs will be clearly presented on the access road to warn Aboriginal visitors that Corroboree Rock is an important men's sacred site and dangerous for Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men. Senior men also request that visitors do not drink alcohol near the sacred site.

**Facilities** - Visitor facilities include an unsealed car park for about 15 vehicles, a pit toilet, picnic table, and an interpretive shelter. There is also a one kilometre walking track circling the base of the sacred site. Pressing visitor issues the partners face include:

- Preventing visitors climbing the rock face or climbing through a small 'window' in the formation;
- Graffiti scraped into the 'window' removed;
- Rehabilitating eroded areas at the base of the rock, informal walking pads and an old track leading to the "window" through the rock formation; and

The Reserve's facilities are basic but adequate for current visitation. Any upgraded facilities should be designed to only require low maintenance and protect the site from damage.

Traditional Owners would like to encourage visitors to stay on the walking track, not drink alcohol near the sacred site and help keep the site clean. The partners also recognise that camping is not consistent with the sacred site. Visitors seeking accommodation should be directed to local providers, such as Ross River Resort or other nearby Parks and Reserves.

**Interpretation** - Public knowledge helps promote appreciation and respect and reduces the risk of unintentional damage to significant areas. However, given the spiritual significance of the site senior men will not consent to any publication or broadcasting of images or film associated with the sacred site.

Interpretation within Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve should:

- promote the site as a place of spiritual importance and a living cultural site;
- provide orientation for other Parks and Reserves of the district; and
- only publicly present the name 'Corroboree Rock' and carefully manage information and images to ensure Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men do not read about or see images of the site.

**Safety** - All visitor activity on the Reserve carries some risk of injury. Rangers are trained in emergency response and first aid, and regularly patrol to monitor facilities and visitor behaviour. Facilities are maintained to the highest practicable standards for visitor safety. A district Emergency Response Plan, which is reviewed annually, provides Rangers with clear direction in an emergency.

#### **Aim**

- Appreciation of the Reserve's value as part of a living cultural landscape.

#### **Management Direction**

**5.1 Reserve presentation** - The joint management partners will actively seek the

assistance from Tourism NT, Tourism Central Australia and other agencies to ensure Corroboree Rock is promoted consistent with its values as a sacred site.

**5.2 Visitor Interpretation** – The Partners will develop an interpretation strategy and annual operational program for the East MacDonnell District. They will invest in a basic level of interpretation in the Reserve.

- **Visitor Information** - – Orientation information introducing the wider East MacDonnell district may be considered.
- **Image restrictions** - To the best of their ability, the partners will manage information and images of Corroboree Rock to ensure Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men do not read about or see images of the site. The partners will not consent to any publication or broadcasting of images or film of the sacred site.
- **Monitoring** - Information shared with the public will be monitored by senior men and through consultations with the CLC.

**5.3 Visitor access** - The road will be maintained to reduce the risk of erosion. All vehicle and foot traffic will be restricted to the formed road and walking path.

- **Warning Signs** – will be established at the Reserve entrance on the access road to warn visitors, including women, children and uninitiated men that Corroboree Rock is an important men’s sacred site with significant cultural restrictions with penalties for infringement.
- **Closures** - The Reserve or areas within it may be temporarily closed to the public for fire, rehabilitation works and important ceremonies. These infrequent events will be appropriately publicised.
- **Pets** - Entry of pets will be consistent with existing Parks and Wildlife policy.

**5.4 Visitor Facilities** – Current facilities will be maintained to provide a basic standard of service to visitors, and subject to resources upgrades will be to a basic design standard..

- **Future development** – The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee will annually endorse rolling five-year works plans and site development for parks and reserves for the district. Decisions will be made in accordance with structures and processes outlined in section 2.
- **Walking track** – The walking track may be maintained to a Class 4 standard (AS 2156.1-2001), depending on available resources. This standard enables visitors to walk in a slightly modified natural environment where interpretation and facilities are not common. Off-track exploration of the Reserve will be discouraged.
- **Camping and Campfires**- will not be permitted in the Reserve.
- **Rock climbing, abseiling and mountain-bike riding** – will not be permitted in the Reserve.
- **Rubbish** – Visitors will be encouraged to take their rubbish with them.
- **Alcohol** – Signs will be placed asking visitors not to drink alcohol within the Reserve.

**5.5 Visitor safety** – The Emergency Response Plan for parks and reserves of the district will be reviewed annually. Identified risks will be rectified on a priority basis and rangers will receive appropriate training. Tour operators will be encouraged to report incidents and safety issues to Park Operations.

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## Appendix 1. Selected Performance Indicators

These performance indicators are an additional tool to assist the joint management partners to measure the success of joint management across parks and reserves of the East MacDonnell District. They are not the only measures of success and other measures may be developed over time. There is a reasonable expectation that they will be achieved, if not year by year, then over the longer term of this plan. When indicators are not achieved, the reasons need to be established and steps taken to improve outcomes.

Aims	Performance Indicators	Targets	Means
<b>Managing Country</b>			
Traditional Owners satisfied with the protection of cultural sites.	- Traditional Owner satisfaction.	High	Partner satisfaction monitoring (see Mgt. Dir. 2.4).
<b>Reserve Governance</b>			
Equitable partnership with effective governance.	- Joint Management Partners satisfied with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication and Engagement</li> <li>- Representation and Decision-making processes</li> <li>- Building capacity</li> </ul>	High	Partner satisfaction monitoring. Ongoing record-keeping, reporting and review.
The Aims and Directions in this Plan are achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities.	- Achievement of Aims and Management Directions in this plan - Implementation of strategies and annual operational programs	Outcomes realised % of priority actions completed	Partner satisfaction monitoring. Ongoing record-keeping, reporting and review.



# **N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park**

## **Joint Management Plan** October 2011

WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that the following document contains cultural information about Indigenous Men's sacred sites.

N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park Joint Management Plan

Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory, Department of Natural Resources,  
Environment, The Arts and Sport

PO Box 1120,

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This plan was prepared by Parks and Wildlife and Traditional Owners with assistance from the Central Land Council. Planning for formal joint management began with a series of meetings between Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife staff and Central Land Council staff in 2007.

## Executive Summary

N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park is located in the East MacDonnell Ranges about 90 kilometres east of Alice Springs. The Gorge is a cultural treasure house, with thousands of rock carvings (petroglyphs) which express the art and stories of the Eastern Arrernte people. The Park is jointly managed between Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife.

N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park's primary values are that it contains Eastern Arrernte men's sacred sites which include approximately 6 000 stone engravings or petroglyphs. For Traditional Owners the area is called Ilwentje and is an important part of their living cultural landscape. The Park is also an important archaeological and heritage site. The abundance and diversity of engravings are unparalleled in the southern portion of the Northern Territory (NT) and is listed on the Northern Territory Heritage Register. The Park provides visitors with a rare opportunity to see a living art gallery in close proximity to Alice Springs, with low key camping and day-use facilities. The Park's contribution to conservation in the context of the NT Reserve system is minor however it contains several plants nationally listed as "vulnerable", including one species which is only protected in this Park.

The main objectives of Park management are to protect the petroglyphs, art sites and other sacred sites; to enable visitors to appreciate and understand the cultural significance of the Park; to protect specific habitat for three threatened plant species and to build effective governance which empowers Traditional Owners and successfully manages the Park.

To Traditional Owners the main gorge area poses spiritual danger to Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men. For their safety, senior men want ensure that they do not enter past the first waterhole. Key threats to the petroglyphs include fire and human interference particularly graffiti, vandalism and souveniring. The main threat to the Park's natural values is wildfires encouraged by grassy weeds.

The Park will receive a low level of management from park operations and there is scope for the partners to consider removing the campground. However, there are opportunities to expand Indigenous employment associated with the district and foster collaboration with adjacent landowners.

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# Vision for the Park

## “Working together as one”

Both partners will work together to manage the Park, respecting and acknowledging each others’ skills and knowledge, and communicating clearly. A strong partnership will mean:

- The country and sacred sites are looked after properly for current and future generations;
- Traditional Owners are actively involved through jobs, training and business opportunities; and
- Visitors gain a deeper understanding of the country and its people.

## 1. Introduction

N’Dhala Gorge Nature Park (501.4 hectares) is set in a spectacular part of the East MacDonnell Ranges, 89 kilometres east of Alice Springs (Map 1) and located on the eastern portion of Australia’s Red Centre National Landscape.

The area was first reserved as ‘Green Valley Scenic Reserve’ under the National Parks and Gardens Ordinance on 21 May 1963 and committed to the care and control of the Northern Territory Reserves Board and on 30 June 1978 management of the Reserve was vested in the Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission. In 1975 the name was changed to N’Dhala Gorge Scenic Reserve (N’Dhala was believed to be an Eastern Arrernte name referring to a swamp near the gorge). On 21 September 1979, pursuant to the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* (TPWC Act), the area was renamed N’Dhala Gorge Nature Park. The Eastern Arrernte name for the gorge is ‘Ilwentje’.

In 2003, N’Dhala Gorge Nature Park was included in Schedule 1 of the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*, allowing the Northern Territory and Traditional Owners to enter into formal joint management of the park. In 2009, title was transferred to Irlwentye Aboriginal Land Trust to be held on trust for the Traditional Owners and was leased to the Northern Territory for a term of 99 years.

### 1.1 Purpose

#### 1.1.1 Values of the Park

The key values for the Park are:

**An Eastern Arrernte men’s sacred site** – The Park contains important men’s sacred sites including approximately 6 000 stone engravings or petroglyphs. For Traditional Owners, N’Dhala Gorge or Ilwentje is part of a broad complex landscape of spiritual significance.

**Archaeological sites and objects** -The engravings of N’Dhala Gorge are among the most valuable cultural sites in central Australia. The abundance and diversity of engravings are unparalleled in the southern portion of the NT. The site is listed in the



Northern Territory Heritage Register. In addition to the many thousands of individual petroglyphs other archaeological materials found within the Park include stone artefacts, charcoal and faunal remains, a stone arrangement, hunting hide and painting sites.

**Regionally significant biodiversity values** – The Park is set within the internationally significant MacDonnell Bioregion. It contains several plants of conservation significance; however its contribution to conservation is relatively minor.

### 1.1.2 Purpose of the Park

N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park (Map 2) will be managed to:

- Protect the Aboriginal sacred sites and sites of archaeological significance;
- Meet the needs of Traditional Owners to maintain their connection to country and be involved in management and on ground operations;
- Enable visitors to appreciate and understand the cultural significance of the Park; and
- Maintain the Park's significant vegetation communities.

### 1.1.3 Purpose of the Plan

This Plan gives direction to the day-to-day management of the Park. It also provides the primary source against which management performance will be measured. Management success will be defined by performance measures developed by the partners (see Appendix 1). They are specific, measurable, achievable and repeatable and will primarily be implemented through operational strategies and annual programs and reviewed by the Joint Management Committee.

This joint management plan supersedes the *1993 Plan of Management*. It will remain in effect until amended or replaced by a new plan. Further responsibilities regarding the joint management of the Park are set out in the Park Lease.

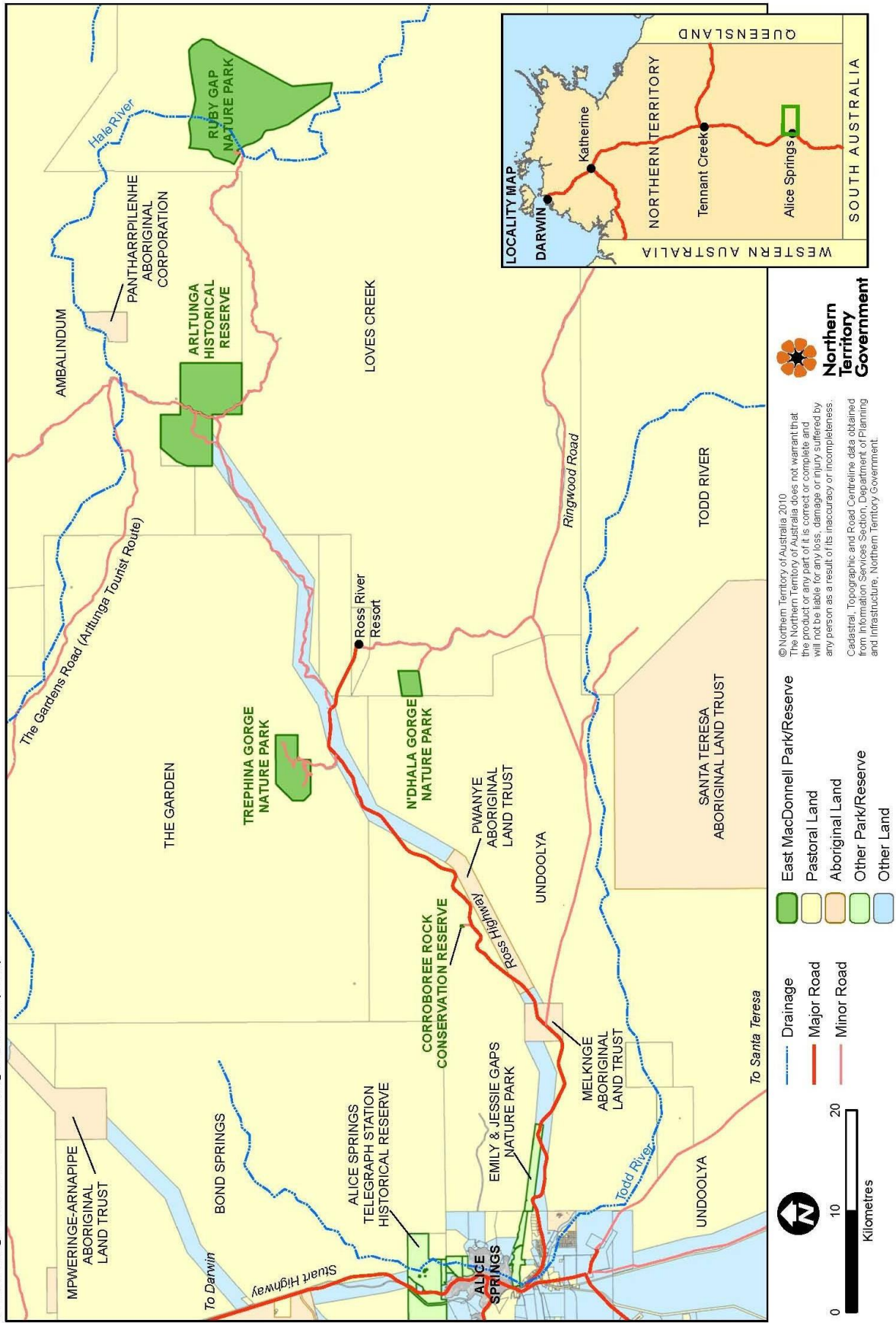
This Plan is closely linked to other joint management plans of the East MacDonnells district including Trepina Gorge Nature Park, Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve, Ruby Gap Nature Park and Arltunga Historical Reserve, and should be considered with them.

Similar Joint Management Plans are concurrently being prepared for Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve and Trepina Gorge Nature Park in the East MacDonnells district. These plans have been developed separately for practical and cultural reasons, including restrictions associated with Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve and N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park. However, the joint management plans of the district will operate under the East MacDonnell Joint Management Committee.

This joint management plan was prepared in accordance with, and complies with, the TPWC Act, the Park Lease and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) registered with the National Native Title Tribunal pursuant to the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*. The Plan has force in law under the TPWC Act.

The land subject to this Joint Management Plan is Portion No. 784 that will be held by the Irlwentye Aboriginal Land Trust on behalf of Traditional Owners.

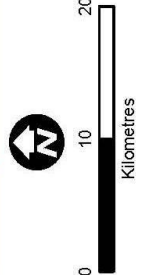
Map 1. Location Map, Parks and Reserves of the East MacDonnell Ranges N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park Joint Management Plan (Draft)



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 Cadastral, Topographic and Road Centreline data obtained from Information Services Section, Department of Planning and Infrastructure, Northern Territory Government.

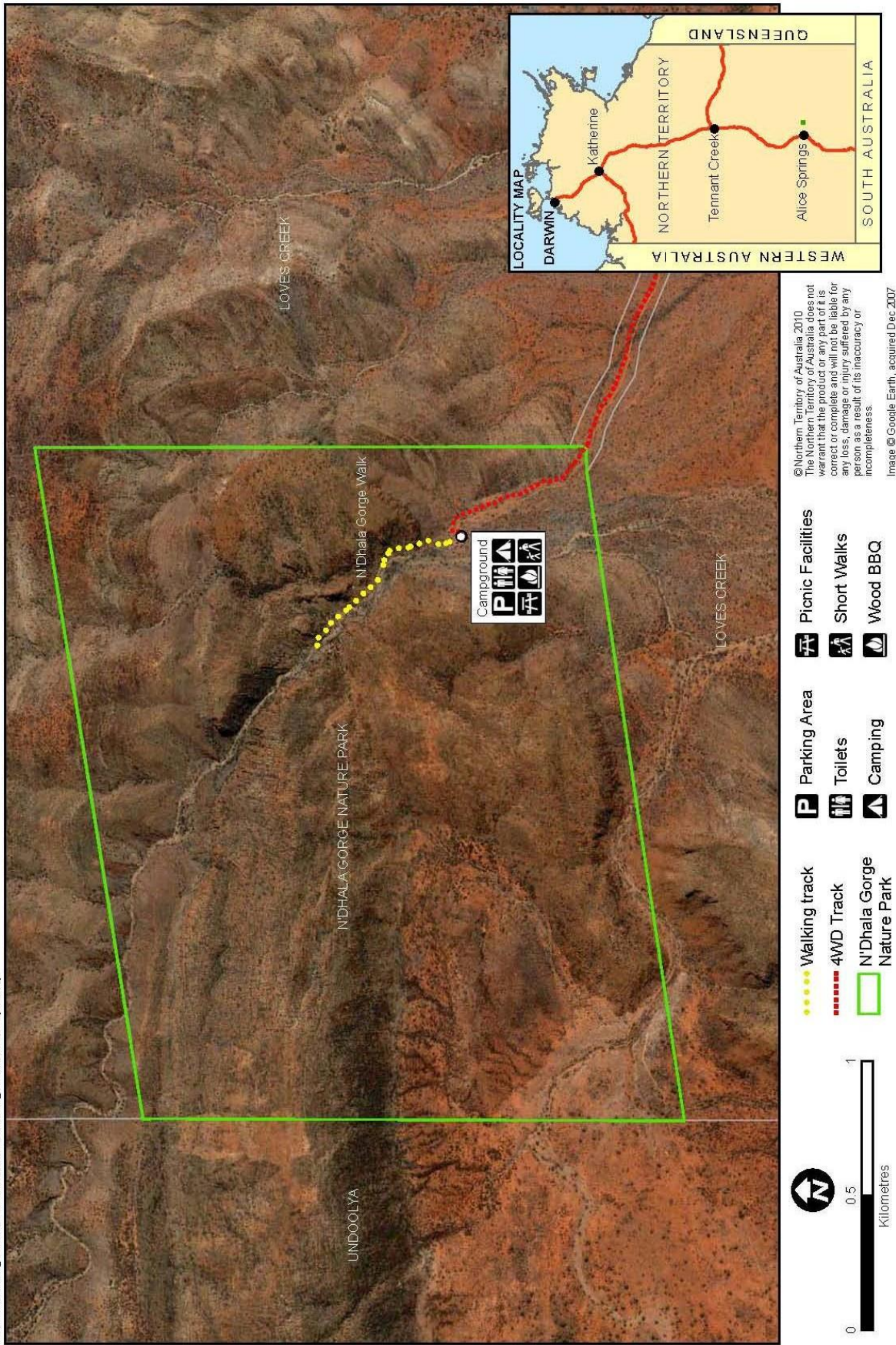
- East MacDonnell Park/Reserve
- Pastoral Land
- Aboriginal Land
- Other Park/Reserve
- Other Land

- Drainage
- Major Road
- Minor Road





Map 2. Park Map  
N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park Joint Management Plan (Draft)



## 1.2 Joint Management

Joint Management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service working together, exchanging their knowledge and expertise, solving problems and sharing decisions.

N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park is Aboriginal land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*. Traditional Owners have agreed to lease the land back to the Territory for 99 years and work together to manage the Park. The terms of joint management for the Park have authority in law under the TPWC Act, the N'Dhala Gorge Lease and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) registered under the *Native Title Act*. This Plan complies with all of these legal instruments.

Under section 25AA of the TPWC Act the joint management partners for N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park are the Territory Government and the Traditional Owners of the park. The Territory will generally carry out its joint management obligations through the Parks and Wildlife Service. For the purposes of this Joint Management Plan, references to the Parks and Wildlife Service as a Joint Management Partner should be read as including a reference to the Territory.

### 1.2.1 Traditional Owners

Pwenye is the Eastern Arrernte name for the long hill south of the Ross Highway stretching east from the Numery Road turnoff to N'Dhala Gorge; it is also the name Traditional Owners use to refer to themselves as part of their country. Neighbouring 'countries' or 'estates' are Antulye to the west, Uytetye to the south, Ulpmer to the north, Uleralkwe to the east.

Ancestral tracks and song lines traverse these estates, linking Aboriginal people in the region and sometimes, right across the country. Arrernte kin relations, known as Anpernirrentye or 'skin names,' allow individuals to be placed in a social framework which guides every person's behaviour to others within that system. Anpernirrentye also incorporates a system of descent and inheritance, where children inherit a skin name in line with their father's anyenhenge (father / child skin names).

People descended from a paternal grandfather and his brothers are referred to as Apmereke-artweye. They are the recognised holders of an estate or country with the right to make decisions affecting the use of that country; the responsibility of looking after that country; and the accountability to the land itself and the spirits of their ancestors still present in the landscape. Traditionally, failure to comply with these responsibilities could result in sickness or death, so that when a person becomes sick, it is often attributed to neglecting their country.

Apmereke-artweye are assisted in their role as owners by their kwertengerle – people who hold a different connection to the same country, often through their mother's father or mother's brother. Kwertengerle can become the holders of knowledge with significant ritual responsibilities and are considered essential partners for discussing any issues affecting that country. Together the Apmereke-artweye and Kwertengerle care for the land, exercising complementary roles and responsibilities. Anthropologists will often refer to this group as the estate group.

There are a number of other factors that play a significant role in assuming positions of authority or seniority within a group related to an estate, principally residence and knowledge of country, aknganeme (conception or 'borning' place), gender and involvement in ritual activity. Personality and level of interest are also relevant factors for the exercise of authority over an estate. These factors are often played out in the secret/sacred arena of traditional ceremony. The recognition of seniority from the broader group is important to consider in the context of joint management.

Traditional Law is transmitted through the dreaming stories of the totemic ancestors, or the Altyerre. Layers of meaning encoded into the stories and songs are gradually revealed at various stages throughout a person's life. Sacred objects, songs, designs and dramatic acts have been left behind by the spirit ancestors to transmit this knowledge. Young children are taught the 'open' or public versions of these stories, and may attend certain stages of some ceremonies. Some men will eventually become Akgerrtye (senior men) - a status that is recognised by other members of the group and not one that a person can independently assume. Ceremony is traditionally the arena in which decision-making occurs. These ceremonies are usually held between October and March.

Most Traditional Owners for N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park live in Santa Teresa, Amoonguna and Alice Springs. The closest residential area to the Park is Williams Well Outstation, approximately 25 kilometres to the west off the Ross Highway.

### **1.2.2 The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service**

The Parks and Wildlife Service is dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural values of parks and reserves, while providing high-quality nature-based tourism and recreation opportunities for visitors. The Service is committed to engaging the public and working with the interests of the community. The Parks and Wildlife Service is committed to seeing that the joint management partnership grows and becomes truly equitable and that Traditional Owners benefit culturally, socially and economically from joint management.

This Plan has been developed by the joint management partners in a positive spirit. Like the Traditional Owners of the Park, the Parks and Wildlife Service is optimistic about the future.

## 2. Park Governance

Joint management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service working together to achieve their shared goals and aspirations, exchanging knowledge and expertise solving problems together and sharing decisions. A mutual understanding of country, Law, culture and Indigenous decision-making principles are fundamental to making good joint management decisions. For the purpose of joint management, the term governance is defined as “the way the partners organise themselves and the rules they put in place to realise their shared vision.” It includes all aspects of partnership, communication, planning and decision-making.

Making sure that the joint management partners have a clear structure and process for making decisions is essential for good joint management. The partners are optimistic that this new way of learning and working together will improve management equity. Both partners acknowledge that it will take time and support to build capacity and a strong working relationship.

### Principles for effective governance

- Decision-making and accountability should be equally shared.
- Time spent together on country is important for developing mutual trust, respect and understanding between the partners.
- Indigenous decision-making processes must be respected.
- Management priorities will be guided by the Park’s key values.
- Planning and decision-making must incorporate risk identification and minimisation.
- Engagement and employment of Traditional Owners in management operations is central to joint management success.
- Resources are limited and must be used effectively.
- Joint management has to be checked to see that it is working well. It is important to keep improving.
- Public support for joint management is very important.

### 2.1 Planning and decision-making

#### 2.1.1 A partnership approach

Joint management provides exciting new opportunities to make better management decisions based on a combination of Indigenous and western approaches to land management. Successful joint management relies on meaningful engagement of Traditional Owners and will be measured against the achievement of the aims in this Plan and the satisfaction of the joint management partners.

For Traditional Owners of N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park it is essential that appropriate senior people are involved in making decisions related to their country. Across the East

MacDonnell district different groups of Traditional Owners maintain responsibility for different areas of country which includes the Park. Traditional Owners emphasise the importance of ensuring decision-making structures reflect the differing responsibility between different family groups. As N'Dhala Gorge contains important sacred sites it is essential that senior men are involved in decisions involving these areas.

Accordingly, decision-making will be structured so that the people whose country is affected are well-informed about park operations and are involved in decisions. Working in a cross-cultural environment requires mutual trust and respect as well as clear communication at all levels. A shared understanding of country, culture and indigenous decision-making principles are fundamental to making good joint management decisions.

### 2.1.2 Roles and responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities are essential for joint management and each of the partners have responsibilities for looking after the Park in accordance with traditional Aboriginal laws and laws applicable in the Northern Territory (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

- A **Joint Management Committee** is intended to be the principal governing body for parks and reserves of the East MacDonnells district, including N'Dhala Gorge and Trepina Gorge Nature Parks. The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee's primary functions are to provide strategic direction to Park operations, determine local policy and procedures, and review progress against management directions in this plan. The Committee will be composed of representatives nominated by the main Traditional Owner families and senior Parks and Wildlife staff. It is hoped that centralising management between all reserves of the East MacDonnells to a single Joint Management Committee will increase management efficiency and effectiveness across the district.
- **Traditional Owners** are responsible to the land, law and culture. They retain special responsibilities for decision-making and oversee cultural protocols for the sacred sites. They are responsible for managing traditional knowledge and passing it onto the right people, maintaining and keeping the country alive. Senior men have further responsibilities and must be involved in any matters which affect sacred sites.
- The **Parks and Wildlife Service** is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Park under the direction of the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee. The Parks and Wildlife Service is required to finance and resource the Park's ongoing management including administrative functions, staffing, infrastructure and services in accordance with the Park Lease, Indigenous Land Use Agreement and any relevant laws. Parks and Wildlife employees are responsible to the Minister for Parks and Wildlife and the Northern Territory Government.
- The **Central Land Council (CLC)** has an important role in assisting joint management. The TPWC Act defines the CLC's role as representing and protecting the interests of the Traditional Owners in relation to the Park's management. Specifically they are to represent and support Traditional Owners' interests, undertake consultations, assist with monitoring joint management processes, and help resolve differences between Traditional Owners, if needed.

All joint management decisions will be consistent with any relevant laws in force in the Northern Territory, with the Park Lease and Indigenous Land Use Agreement, and with any relevant Northern Territory Government policies or guidelines.



### 2.1.3 Building effective governance and continuous improvement

Joint management provides opportunities to make better management decisions based on a combination of indigenous and western approaches. A positive working relationship based on mutual understanding and respect is essential for joint management to work.

Working in a cross-cultural environment requires clear communication at all levels. Respecting differences and a commitment to understanding each other's views will make for a strong relationship and provide the basis for effective joint management and governance.

The partners recognise the need for training to build effective governance across the district. Traditional Owners are willing to teach Rangers and visitors cross-cultural skills, language and their understanding of country. Rangers are prepared to share their knowledge of planning, budgeting, organisational structures and resource management with Traditional Owners.

The partners are also committed to continuous learning and improvement. The process involves tracking progress against performance measures, evaluating results and purposely modifying management to reflect new knowledge and insights (see Appendix 1). It also involves monitoring to measure efficiencies, effectiveness and progress toward long-term aims.

**Table 1.** Decision-making framework.

East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee Representatives from Traditional Owners and Senior Parks and Wildlife Staff	Park Operations Parks Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise executive authority and be accountable for the management of the Park.</li> <li>• Set strategic direction and park-specific policy and procedure for management programs and staff to implement.</li> <li>• Approve work programs and internal annual budgets.</li> <li>• Establish development directions and criteria to evaluate proposals.</li> <li>• Consult with senior men responsible for the sacred site.</li> <li>• Communicate with, and provide feedback from, the groups that members represent.</li> <li>• Provide a link with the key stakeholders and wider community for the East MacDonnell district.</li> <li>• Monitor and review management performance.</li> <li>• Consider other proposals not specified in this plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for day-to-day management of the Park.</li> <li>• Implement operational programs, policy and procedure as approved by the management committee.</li> <li>• Maximise on-ground participation of Traditional Owners in management of the Park.</li> <li>• Report progress to the management committee.</li> <li>• Liaise with stakeholders and neighbours.</li> <li>• Issue permits, contracts and licenses according to policy and procedures.</li> <li>• Monitor management effectiveness and adjust management according to new information, improved procedures, new technology and new threats or issues.</li> </ul>

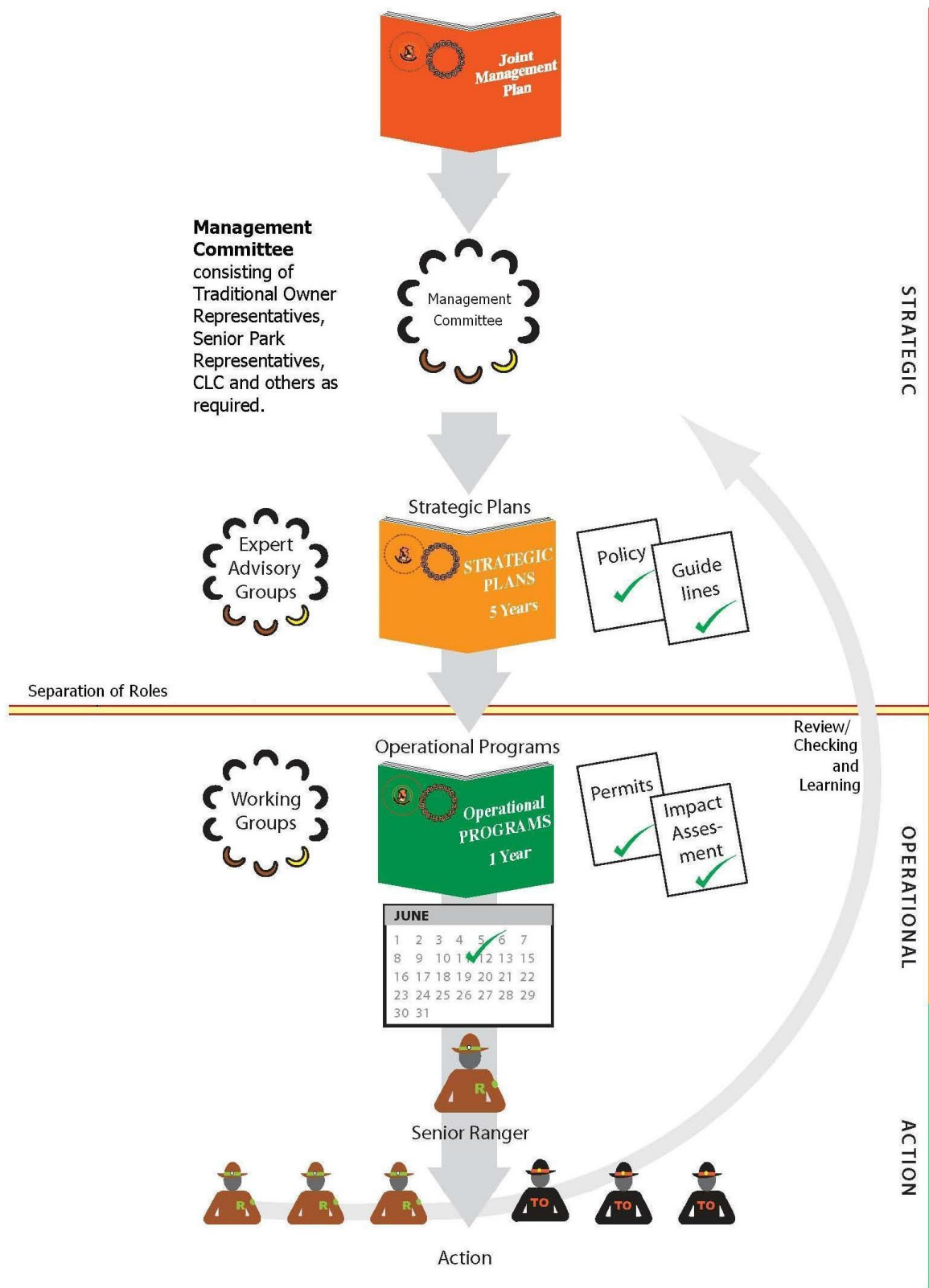
#### **2.1.4 Community engagement and participation**

Good working relationships with landholders situated between the parks and reserves of the East MacDonnells should increase management effectiveness across the district. Matters of mutual concern include fencing, boundary access, control of stock and feral animals, weed control, fire management, visitor access and safety.

While senior men are obligated to keep the stories for N'Dhala secret, they still want to promote the importance of the site and their culture.

There are no immediate proposals to expand the Park. The vision of a “greater park” linking the West MacDonnell National Park, Trepina Gorge Nature Park and N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park has been investigated from time to time over the last three decades. Such a vision may become a reality in time through co-operative arrangements with neighbouring landholders such as Loves Creek, Undoolya and The Garden Stations.

**Figure 1. Park Management and Operations – Roles and Responsibilities**



## **Aim**

- Equitable partnership with effective governance.
- Management Directions

**2.1 Joint Management Committee** – A Joint Management Committee will oversee operational management of parks and reserves in the East MacDonnell district, including N'Dhala Gorge and Trepahina Nature Parks. For matters that directly relate to men's sacred sites, the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee must consult with senior men responsible for the site.

- **Role** - The role of the East MacDonnells Management Committee is to provide direction and policy. The Committee will not have a direct role in day-to-day operations. The Committee will represent the interests of Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife. As an initial priority, the partners will formally define and document all aspects of their roles, as well as the rules and processes to effectively govern the Park.

- **Meetings** - The East MacDonnells Management Committee will meet at least once a year.

- **Membership** – The Committee will consist of at least three Traditional Owners representing estate groups associated with nominated parks and reserves of the East MacDonnell district;

- at least two Senior Government Officers;

- at least one Land Council Officer, and

- other persons invited by the partners to provide advice on particular issues or to represent community interests (for example the tourism industry).

**2.2 Making decisions** – Decisions will be made by consensus. The roles and decision-making responsibilities of the East MacDonnells Management Committee are summarised in Table 1.

**2.3 Expert advisory groups and working groups** – Working groups of Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife staff, CLC officers and specialists may be formed to support the Committee or address specific tasks, such as for fire management, interpretation or tourism.

**2.4 Supporting and building effective governance** - The partners and CLC recognise that joint management will be a process of continuous learning and improvement. In the future, other governance arrangements may be refined to increase effectiveness.

- **Representation** - The CLC will represent and support Traditional Owners' interests and facilitate consultations when required.

- **Governance training** – Governance training will be provided to the joint management partners to help them work effectively together, with attention given to needs identified by the participatory monitoring and evaluation program.

- **Professional development** – Professional standards and staff competencies will be supported by ongoing training in all aspects of Park management with special emphasis on cross-cultural training involving Traditional Owners.

- **Information exchange** – A key role of committee members will be to bring to the Committee the collective expertise, interests and concerns of their group. Committee members will be responsible for passing on information to the wider Traditional Owner group, local community and key stakeholders. The CLC will provide support if required. Park operations will be responsible for effectively communicating information about Park management programs to the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee.

- **Continuous learning and improvement** – A monitoring and evaluation program will be developed to help develop effective governance. Performance will be measured annually using indicators (see Appendix 1) relating to:

- the satisfaction of the partners;
- the effectiveness of the partnership (including decision-making processes, participation and communication); and
- the implementation of this Plan.

- **Dispute resolution** – The partners will aim to resolve disputes through open discussion and communication, involving the CLC as required or requested by the Traditional Owners. However, should a dispute arise between the partners that cannot be resolved, the parties will follow the dispute resolution processes set out in the Lease.

**2.5 Community engagement and participation** – The partners will build partnerships and linkages with neighbouring landholders, non-Government organisations and the local community to improve conservation and nature-based visitor experiences both on- and off-park.

- **Neighbours** - The partners will work with neighbours and local community groups to address mutual interests. Such groups will be invited to work strategically with the partners on conservation and tourism planning, to resolve common issues and develop opportunities, including those that are linked to the Park but lie outside the boundary.
- **Informed Community** - The partners will keep the community and stakeholders informed about significant issues and proposed developments.
- **Aboriginal Employment** - The partners will be proactive in developing local solutions for Aboriginal employment. Aboriginal employment will remain a standing item at Committee meetings.
- **Tourism Industry** - The partners will be proactive in working with the tourism industry through established forums and organisations such as Tourism Central Australia and Tourism NT and development will remain a standing item at Committee meetings.

## 2.2 Business operations

### 2.2.1 Effective operations

Park operations are currently carried out by Park Rangers based at Trepina Gorge Nature Park with regular patrols to the Park. It is hoped that day-to-day management will be carried out by both Rangers and Traditional Owners in the future. At present almost all funding to manage the Park is provided by the Northern Territory Government from funding appropriated to manage the Northern Territory's Parks estate. Major works and ongoing programs are subject to Territory-wide government priorities.

On-ground work in parks and reserves across the East MacDonnells is directed by a hierarchy of strategies and operational programs that are developed to achieve the long-term aims included in this and related Plans. The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee will be responsible for endorsing long-term strategies and overseeing operational programs implemented by Rangers, Traditional Owners, contractors and volunteers. The Committee's role will be to match priorities and new

information with available staff and budgets to best achieve the Park's long-term aims and vision.

### **2.2.2 Indigenous training, employment and enterprise development**

Joint management will promote opportunities for employment and business for Traditional Owners across the East MacDonnell district. Traditional Owners emphasise how important training and employment is for their families and acknowledge their responsibility to support young people.

Since the establishment of new joint management arrangements in the East MacDonnells, Traditional Owners have participated in paid management programs on a flexible basis. Such flexible, project-based employment provides many benefits including work experience, skills exchange and accredited training, and helps build positive working relationships between Traditional Owners and Park staff. Where necessary, it helps Traditional Owners become work-ready and local Aboriginal organisations, including community ranger groups, contract-ready.

Traditional Owners are keen to be involved in contract work. Preference will be given to Traditional Owners of the park to participate in any commercial activities approved under the lease, subject to any law in force in the Northern Territory. Where capacity is lacking, the partners will work with local Aboriginal people to build confidence, provide exposure, knowledge and opportunities to gain experience.

The East MacDonnells attracts many tourists, providing an excellent opportunity for Traditional Owners to present their living culture, from a personal perspective, to visitors from all over Australia and the world. Joint management and liaison with the tourism industry can help develop cultural tourism.

Access by Aboriginal Rangers, contractors and trainees to sacred sites should be carefully managed under the direction of senior men.

### **2.2.3 Research, survey and monitoring**

Effective management is very much about review and continuous improvement (see Appendix 1). Research, survey and monitoring programs associated with the Park should have clear objectives and be integrated with operational programs.

Research is strongly encouraged where it will benefit the Park or the wider region. Research or surveys undertaken by external organisations may require permits issued under the TPWC By-laws. Park-based guidelines for permits will be negotiated by the partners.

Traditional Owners have knowledge of the Park that may contribute to research outcomes. It is important that they are consulted and invited to participate in research, survey and monitoring projects and, where possible, employed in this work. It is important that the outcomes of research projects are communicated to the partners and for the intellectual propertyrights of Traditional Owners to be protected.

### **2.2.4 Regulated activities**

**Permits** – All commercial operations, tours, commercial film and photography, public events, public gatherings, interfere with or take wildlife, and special access are regulated within the Park and require a permit under the TPWC By-laws. Permit holders must abide by the conditions on each permit so that the values of the Park are not negatively affected.

**Permit approval** – An effective permit processing system is needed to assess permit applications submitted to Parks and Wildlife. The East MacDonnells Joint Management



Committee will establish local policy and guidelines for Park operations for the issue of permits, subject to the provisions of the TPWC Act and TPWC By-laws. The partners will need to have regard to timeliness of processing, the interests of Traditional Owners, the community, industry stakeholders and existing Parks and Wildlife policy. Such guidelines should also explicitly state when a proposed activity will, and will not, require consultation with Traditional Owners. The rights, obligations and conditions of permit holders are usually specified in the permit and will be consistent with conditions determined by the partners. Some permits may require paid supervision by Traditional Owners or Parks and Wildlife staff. The CLC will consult with Traditional Owners on permit applications that request any access or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors until any necessary agreed guidelines and procedures are developed.

**Tour operator permits** – Tour companies visiting any Northern Territory park or reserve require a permit issued under the TPWC By-laws. Most tour operator permits are addressed through the Tour Operator Permit System. If special provisions are needed a separate permit is required, with the operators rights, obligations and conditions usually detailed in the permit. Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife want information presented by tour operators to be accurate and appropriate, particularly for cultural information.

**Promotion, commercial film and photography** – The key features of N'Dhala Gorge are associated with a men's sacred site. Images or representations of N'Dhala Gorge petroglyphs should not be publicly presented. Senior men have requested that commercial film and photography of the site should not be approved.

**Research** – External research is encouraged especially where the resulting knowledge will improve management of the Park and the Territory's park estate. Any research proposals should be developed in conjunction with Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife staff and be consistent with Park policies and guidelines including ICIP (see Management Direction 4.1). Also wildlife research requires a permit to interfere with, take or keep wildlife.

**Development proposals** – All development proposals need to be reviewed against guidelines and conditions prepared by the partners. Where development proposals, leases or activities may cause environmental, heritage or cultural impacts, the proponent will be required to demonstrate that the proposal complies with all relevant legislation. The proposal will also require the informed consent of Traditional Owners.

**Benefit sharing agreements** - With the consideration of the Committee and consent of all affected Traditional Owners, the Lease and this Plan allow the partners to enter into benefit-sharing arrangements with commercial partners.

**Licence or sub-lease** – In certain circumstances, including where a secure form of land tenure is needed, a licence or sub-lease may be entered into. Any licence or sublease entered into by the Northern Territory in respect of the Park must be consistent with the terms of the Park Lease and must have the prior written consent of the Irlwentye Aboriginal Land Trust on behalf of the Traditional Owners.

**Protecting sacred sites** – Protection for places of cultural significance to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory is afforded under overlapping legislation. The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* (ALRA) gives legal recognition to areas which that Act terms 'sacred sites', defined as: "a site that is sacred to Aboriginals or is otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal tradition, and includes any land that, under a law of the Northern Territory, is declared to be sacred to Aboriginals or of significance according to Aboriginal tradition". The *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* (NTASSA) also provides protection for sites that fall within the scope of the ALRA definition of sacred site. Both the ALRA and NTASSA make it an offence to enter or remain on land that is a sacred site. It is also an offence

under the NTASSA to carry out work on, use or desecrate a sacred site. Further, the NTASSA provides protection for sacred sites by requiring a person who proposes to use or conduct work on land to apply for an Authority Certificate. An Authority Certificate will only be issued if the use of or work on the land can proceed without there being a substantive risk of damage to or interference with a sacred site on or in the vicinity of the land or if an agreement is reached between the applicant and the custodians of the sacred site. Subject to the terms of the NTASSA, this protection enables custodians of the sacred site to say who can enter the site and what can happen in or on the site.

Successful joint management will assist to ensure N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park is protected in accordance with the wishes of the traditional owners. Pursuant to the ALRA, the Central Land Council has a specific function to assist Aboriginals in the taking of measures likely to assist in the protection of sacred sites within the Park.

**Protecting heritage sites** - The *Heritage Conservation Act* provides protection for two categories of places and objects. Firstly, it provides for the protection of prescribed archaeological places and objects,' which include, among other things; places containing rock paintings or carvings, prehistoric or proto-historic occupation places; places containing human remains or burial artefacts; art sites, cultural objects and wood carvings. Under the *Heritage Conservation Act* consent of the Minister is required before work is carried out on or in relation to an archaeological place or object. Further, the *Heritage Conservation Act* also provides for the protection and conservation of declared heritage places and objects.

Under the *Heritage Conservation Regulations* a person who discovers an archaeological place or object must report the discovery and its location to the Director as soon as practicable after discovering it. In addition to this obligation, the Traditional Owners request that if any artefacts are uncovered they are not disturbed and are immediately reported to the senior men through the Central Land Council.

**Proposals for expansion of the Park** – There are no immediate proposals to expand the Park. The vision of a “greater park” linking the West MacDonnell National Park and parks and reserves of the East MacDonnell ranges has been investigated from time to time over several decades. There are opportunities to build links between protected areas of the East MacDonnells through cooperative arrangements with nearby landholders.

**Community living areas** in the district are an integral part of both the continuation of Aboriginal cultural practices in, and the natural and cultural resource management of the country. Through the *Pastoral Land Act*, Traditional Owners have achieved legal ownership of small land parcels in proximity of the Park.

**Mining** – The Park is small and any mining or extractive activities would adversely impact the sites cultural values. Under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*, Traditional Owners have the right to control mining on Aboriginal Land. Currently, Traditional Owners feel strongly that mining is not consistent with the values of the Park and are unlikely to approve it.

**Dealing with proposals not in the Plan** – Any proposal not addressed in the Plan will be initially considered by the partners through the East MacDonnell Joint Management Committee. Any matter that may affect the interests of Traditional Owners will require the consent of affected Traditional Owners via a consultation process conducted by the CLC.

## **Aim**

The Aims and Directions in this Plan achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities

## **Management Directions**

**2.6 Management strategies and operational programs** – The partners will prepare and implement integrated management strategies and operational programs for parks and reserves of the East MacDonnells district, including Corroboree Rock and Trepahina Gorge Nature Parks.

**2.7 Day-to-day management** – Parks and Wildlife will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Park.

- **Financing** – Parks and Wildlife will finance and resource the Park's ongoing management including administrative functions, staff, infrastructure and services taking into account the funding available to the Service and the priorities determined across the NT. Opportunities to supplement the funding of Park operations and programs will be closely examined and could include revenue obtained from sub-leases, commercial agreements, permits etc. External funding may be sought for specific projects.

**2.8 Work experience, training and employment** – The partners will commit to building capacity, employment and career development opportunities for Traditional Owners of the East MacDonnells.

- **Indigenous training and employment strategy** - This strategy will be prepared at an agency level to maximise Aboriginal employment. This strategy will inform initiatives to increase the employment of Aboriginal people in the district. Aboriginal employment will remain a standing item at East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee meetings.

- **Indigenous employment opportunities in Parks and Wildlife** – Parks and Wildlife will continue to provide opportunities for work experience, training, casual work and direct employment of Aboriginal people from the east MacDonnell district where possible. Steps will be put in place to facilitate the uptake of higher level positions including Rangers, managers, technical, administrative and professional specialist positions subject to any applicable laws or policies in force in the Territory.

- **Partnerships with community-based Indigenous rangers and special interest groups** – Local Indigenous Community-based Rangers, community volunteers, and sponsored training and employment programs will be encouraged to assist with Park management.

- **Contract services** – Parks and Wildlife will encourage private sector participation to build the capacity of Aboriginal organisations to fulfil works and service contracts. Preference will be given to participation of Traditional Owners of the park in any commercial activities conducted under the lease subject to any law in force in the Territory. If other contractors are used, those providing training and employment to local Aboriginal people will be preferred.

**2.9 Tourism** – The partners will liaise with the tourism industry through established fora and organisations. Sustainable cultural and nature-based tourism will be fostered. Traditional Owners will be encouraged to take up commercial tourism opportunities including cultural tours or other viable enterprises the partners will actively seek assistance from agencies such as the CLC and Tourism NT.

**2.10 Cultural advice** – Traditional Owners will be paid for specialist cultural advice and supervision consistent with the Parks and Wildlife Indigenous Fee for Service Policy.

**2.11 Research, survey and monitoring** – Programs will be approved in operational strategies and subject to annual review. Participation by Traditional Owners and employment in research, survey and monitoring projects will be maximised. Indigenous knowledge components will be incorporated in project objectives and outcomes where appropriate.

**2.12 Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property** – Traditional Owners will retain ownership of their Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property and control the use of cultural information in keeping with standard policies developed and agreed by the CLC and Parks and Wildlife.

### **2.13 Regulated activities**

- **Permit policy and guidelines** – The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee will establish local guidelines and conditions for the issue of permits, subject to the provisions of the TPWC Act and TPWC By-laws. These will consider the interests of Traditional Owners, industry needs and Parks and Wildlife policy. In the absence of guidelines, the CLC will consult with Traditional Owners over permit applications and advise Parks and Wildlife when appropriate.

- **Commercial film and photography** - Because of the high spiritual importance of N'Dhala Gorge the partners will not consent to any publication or broadcasting of images or film of any sacred site. Cultural restrictions will be communicated through site interpretation and commercial film and photography permit conditions.

- **Standard permit applications** – Delegated Parks and Wildlife staff can approve permit applications that involve activities or commercial concessions which comply with agreed guidelines and conditions, require no special access, and/or are of a nature or type that has already been considered by the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee.

- **Non-standard permit applications** – Consultation with senior men may be required to provide direction to Park operations if a permit application involves special access or activities not addressed by agreed guidelines or conditions. A permit holder's rights, obligations and conditions will be detailed in conditions or operational agreements attached to the permit.

- **Routine commercial tours** – Permits for tour businesses making normal use of the Park will continue to be issued through the Tour Operator Permit System.

- **Remote area camping** - a permit will be required to camp outside a designated campground in accordance with TPWC By-laws.

- **Special events** – Because of the high spiritual importance of the site proposals for special events will not be encouraged.

- **Research** - Wildlife researchers require permits to interfere with, take or keep wildlife. Parks and Wildlife staff and Traditional Owners should be consulted in developing research proposals and proposals should be consistent with TPWC By-laws, Park policies and guidelines including ICIP (see Management Direction 4.1).

### **2.14 Research, survey and monitoring**

- **Research, survey and monitoring** – Programs will be approved in operational strategies and subject to annual review. Participation by Traditional Owners and employment in research, survey and monitoring projects will be maximised. Indigenous knowledge components will be incorporated in project objectives and outcomes where appropriate.

- **Visitor monitoring** – Visitor monitoring projects will be determined by the partners on an as needs basis.

**2.15 Development proposals** – Any proposal will require informed consent of affected Traditional Owners, consistent with the Lease and appropriate assessment processes.

- **Impact assessment** - The potential impacts of all proposed activities and developments will be considered and assessed commensurate with the scale of potential impact.
- **Commercial sublease** - To provide long-term security for commercial proponents the partners can provide long term sub-leases and operational arrangements and conditions for an enterprise.
- **Benefit-sharing agreements** – The partners may enter into benefit-sharing arrangements for commercial operations and developments within the Park.
- **Infrastructure sublease** – With approval of affected Traditional Owners, consistent with the Lease and appropriate assessment processes, this Plan provides the Territory Government the right to sub-lease or license portions of the Park for specific purposes, including public infrastructure.
- **Sacred sites clearances** –The Central Land Council will have sacred site clearance responsibility for all proposed work on the Park. However the joint management partners may agree from time to time that a proponent may require an Authority Certificate under the NTASSA, issued by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.
- **Heritage approvals** – Consent will be sought under the *Heritage Conservation Act* for works to prescribed Aboriginal Archaeological Places and Objects in the Park, historical sites and any significant development involving land disturbance. Sacred site clearances through the Central Land Council will also be sought for works to any archaeological sites on Park.
- **Cultural objects** - All archaeological materials are protected and must not be disturbed. A person who discovers an archaeological place or object must report the discovery to the NT Department responsible for environment and heritage. Traditional Owners also request that if any artefacts are immediately reported to the senior men through the Central Land Council.

**2.16 Extending the Park** – Any proposals to extend the Park by inclusion of adjoining land will be considered by the partners through the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee.

**2.17 Establishing new community living areas** - Any proposal to create community living areas on the Park will be considered by the partners through the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee.

**2.18 Mining and exploration** – Mining applications will be addressed through the ALRA. Fossicking will not be permitted. Nothing in the TPWC Act, limits the right of Traditional Owners to gather ochre within the Park.

**2.19 Dealing with proposals not in the Plan** – Any proposal not addressed in the Plan will be initially considered by the partners through the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee. Any matter that may affect the interests of Traditional Owners will require the consent of affected Traditional Owners via a consultation process conducted by the CLC.

### 3. Zoning

The Park is managed for multiple purposes and different areas of the Park will be managed differently. The zoning plan is a general summary of the purpose and focus of management for all areas of the Park, based on the specific values of those areas and their level of visitor access and facility development.

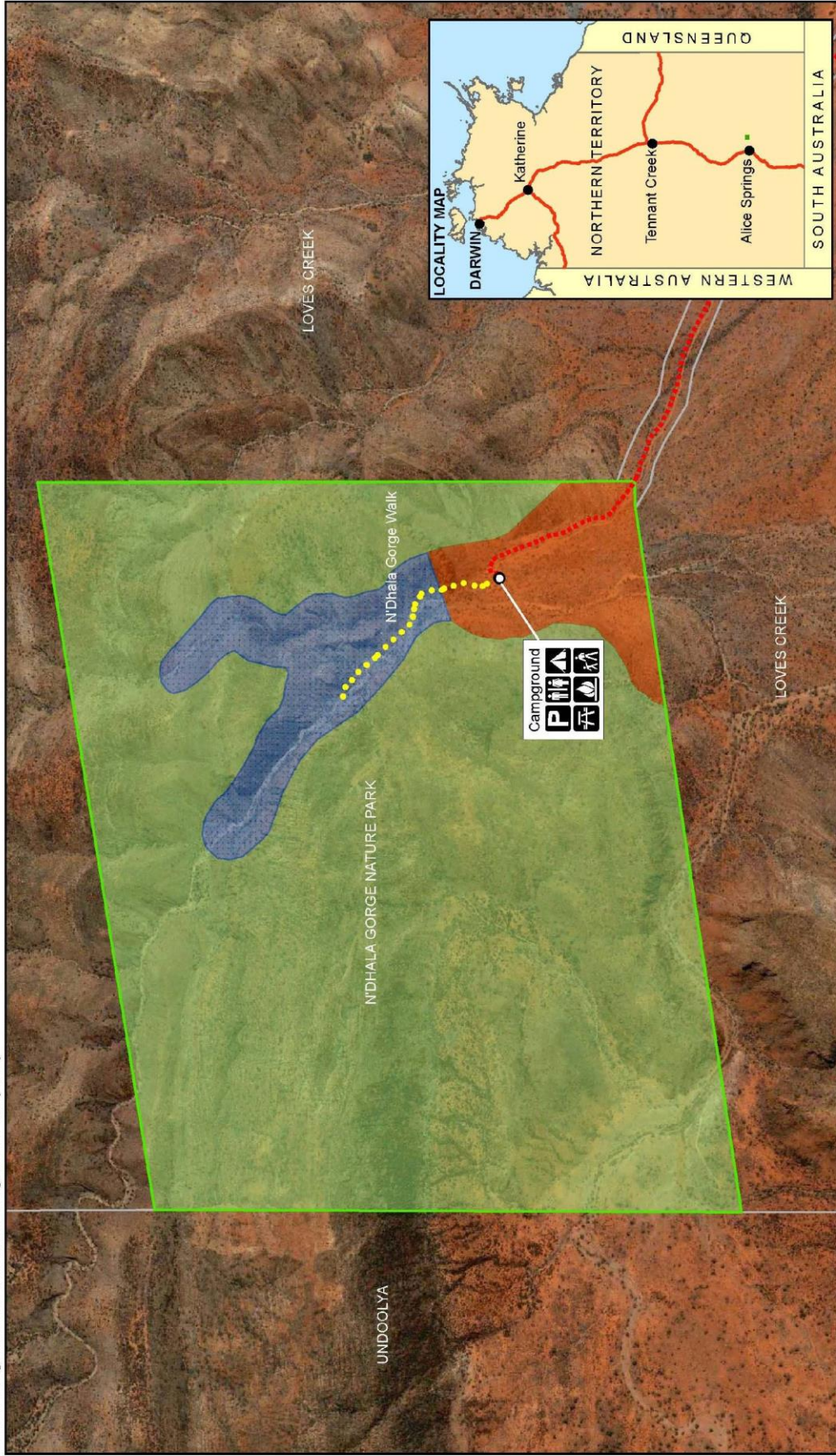
<p><b>Aim</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park values protected whilst providing for public access and enjoyment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Management Directions</b></p> <p><b>3.1 Zoning</b> – Management of the Park will be in accordance with the zoning scheme (Table 2, Map 3).</p> <p><b>3.2 Development</b> - Regardless of the designated zone all management and development will maintain the Park’s natural character and conservation values. Any new development will be subject to approval of the partners and appropriate environmental, sacred site and cultural heritage protection legislation.</p> <p><b>3.3 Special protection zone</b> – To protect sites of exceptional conservation or cultural significance from threatening processes, special protection zones can be designated by the Committee in consultation with stakeholders.</p>
---

**Table 2.** Zoning scheme.

	Visitor Zone	Conservation Zone	Special Protection Zone
<b>Purpose</b>	Concentrated visitor use whilst minimising negative impacts.	Protect natural and cultural values while allowing for personal nature/culturally based experiences.	Protect sacred and heritage sites.
<b>Management Focus</b>	Basic standard facilities and interpretation.	Conservation programs; fire, weed and feral animal management.	Protection of sacred and heritage sites.
<b>Visitor Access</b>	Basic standard access for conventional vehicles. Basic standard pedestrian access. Camping in approved campsites only.	Camping by permit only or in connection with approved concession.	No camping. Visitor access controlled if necessary.
<b>Visitor Activity</b>	Orientation and basic interpretation, picnicking, walking and cultural appreciation.	Overnight self-reliant bush walking, research and commercial tourism (including bush camping) under permit.	Cultural appreciation. Research, survey and monitoring under permit.
<b>Facilities</b>	Parking area, walking track, picnic facilities, shade shelter, interpretive signs, toilet and emergency facilities if needed.	Facilities necessary to ensure protection of values, ie. fences, vehicle barriers, interpretation.  Other developments are not precluded subject to good planning and protection.	Facilities necessary to ensure protection of values, ie. fences, vehicle barriers, interpretation.



Map 3. Zoning Map  
N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park Joint Management Plan (Draft)



**Zoning Scheme**

- Conservation Zone
- Visitor Zone
- Special Protection Zone

**Walking track**

- Walking track
- 4WD Track
- N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park

**Facilities**

- Parking Area
- Toilets
- Camping
- Picnic Facilities
- Short Walks
- Wood BBQ

**Scale**

0 0.5 1  
Kilometres

**LOCALITY MAP**

DARWIN KATHERINE TENNANT CREEK ALICE SPRINGS

WESTERN AUSTRALIA NORTHERN TERRITORY QUEENSLAND SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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## 4 Managing Country

### Principles for managing country

The joint management partners of N'Dhala recognise that:

- Managing country means working together on country and managing natural and cultural values together;
- Management should protect and enhance Park values;
- Management of Indigenous cultural knowledge and sites is the responsibility of Traditional Owners; and
- Adverse impacts of wildfire, weeds, feral animals and erosion should be minimised.

### 4.1 Cultural heritage values

**4.1.1 Eastern Arrernte men's sacred site** - For Traditional Owners, N'Dhala Gorge or Ilwentje, has always been known as a dangerous place, visited only by senior men with special responsibilities. The site is part of a complex landscape of spiritual significance. Ilwentje consists of two gorges with approximately 6 000 individual stone engravings. Dreamings associated with the site include Utnerrengatye (Emu Bush caterpillars) that travel underground east from the Plenty River region, which emerge at a sacred site on Loves Creek where they are joined by Ayeparenye (Tar-vine caterpillars) and Ntyarlke (Elephant Grubs) and then travel to Ilwentye (N'Dhala Gorge). Some caterpillars continued east toward Anthwerrke (Emily Gap) which is the ampere akwetehe (the main and everlasting place) for the Caterpillar dreaming. Another very significant and highly restricted men's site occurs within Ilwentje and requires a high level of protection.

**Cultural restrictions** - The site poses spiritual danger to Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men and senior men feel a strong responsibility to ensure observance of rules that keep forces in check. Visitors ignoring these concerns cause them alarm and distress.

Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men should be warned about the cultural restrictions about the site. For their safety, senior men want ensure that they do not enter past the first waterhole. Park staff and visitors who enter Ilwentye past the first waterhole are required to remain on the marked track. Any work undertaken beyond the first waterhole must be accompanied by a senior male Traditional owner.

**Aboriginal knowledge** - Important knowledge is passed to the next generation through restricted ceremonies connected to this area. The need to transfer knowledge and practices from old to young people is one of the most important issues identified by Traditional Owners. They hold accumulated knowledge spanning thousands of years that will continue to inform and inspire future generations. Recording cultural heritage, particularly oral stories is a priority for Traditional Owners. They also want to incorporate Indigenous ecological knowledge, skills and experiences into on-ground operations for the Park, and ensure it is applied appropriately and in the right context.

There is great scope for Traditional Owners to interpret the significance of the Park to Park staff, commercial operators and visitors. Together the partners can promote an understanding and respect for the traditions, languages, cultures, customs and skills of Traditional Owners. The partners seek to ensure Traditional Owners are always recognised

as the owners of their knowledge and retain the right to control who can use their knowledge and how.

#### **4.1.2 Archaeological sites and objects (including art sites and artefacts)**

The abundance and diversity of engravings within the Park are among the most valuable cultural sites in central Australia. The site was listed in the Northern Territory Heritage Register in 1997.

The petroglyphs of N'Dhala Gorge are found on individually engraved boulders and clusters of engravings. The 6,000 individual petroglyphs are found in 438 engraved sites along the main gorge and 240 engraved sites in the side gorge. Two periods of engravings have been suggested, the first period of engraving possibly occurred around 10 000 years BP and second starting about 3 000 years BP.

A range of archaeological materials also occur within the Park including stone artefacts, charcoal and animal remains, a stone arrangement, hunting hide and painting sites. Such archaeological remains and artwork contribute to our understanding of human adaptations to the arid zone.

**Managing threatening processes** – Fire, plants and human interference are the main threats to the archaeological values of the Park. The petroglyphs can be irreparably damaged by visitors as they explore the gorges. It is also important to note that the Park has suffered from bouts of graffiti and vandalism in the past. Souveniring of artefacts is also a concern.

**Interpretation** - The 'in situ' protection of the park's petroglyphs and well considered removal of any graffiti will maintain the archaeological values of the Park. There is a need to promote the value of the petroglyphs to visitors and to build an awareness of their fragility.

#### **Aims**

- Traditional Owners satisfied with their involvement, fulfilment of their cultural responsibilities and protection of the sacred site.
- Archaeological sites are protected and monitored.

#### **Management Directions**

**4.1 District cultural heritage management strategy (five years) and annual operational programs (one year)** - A cultural heritage management strategy and annual operational program for the East MacDonnell district will be developed with Traditional Owners and consideration of advice provided by specialist groups such as NT Heritage. The partners and Central Land Council will work together to identify supporting resources if required.

- **“Back to country”** – With support from the Central Land Council the partners will spend time on country together, facilitating transmission of cultural knowledge and skills between Traditional Owner families, to the younger generation and to the rangers, as appropriate.
- **Aboriginal cultural business** – Parks and Wildlife will respect advice relating to cultural matters and customary obligations from Traditional Owners. Ample notice will be given to the public regarding temporary closures.
- **Recording of oral histories and Indigenous knowledge** – is a high priority to senior men to strengthen their responsibilities and continue their traditions. Due to the sensitive nature of this information CLC will be responsible for providing support.
- **Indigenous ecological knowledge** and priorities will be incorporated into park

management operations with active involvement of Traditional Owners in planning and implementation activities.

- **Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)** – Cultural knowledge will not be used, or permitted to be used without the prior consent of the Traditional Owners. Wherever possible, the partners will assist the Traditional Owners assert their intellectual property rights, consistent with standard policies developed and agreed by the CLC and Parks and Wildlife.

**4.2 Culturally sensitive areas** – Subject to any relevant laws in force in the Northern Territory, Park operations will uphold restrictions and guidelines for sacred sites or culturally sensitive areas of the Park as directed by senior men or the Central Land Council as their representative.

- **Warning signs** - Warning signs will be presented at the car park and at the first waterhole explaining the area is an important men's sacred site with significant cultural restrictions.

**4.3 Sacred site clearances** – see Management Direction 2.15.

**4.4 Cultural heritage approval** – see Management Direction 2.15.

**4.5 Cultural objects** - see Management Direction 2.15.

**4.6 Archaeological sites** - The 'in situ' protection and appropriate interpretation of the park's petroglyphs will be a high priority. The district cultural heritage management strategy will incorporate assessment, conservation, protection and monitoring of the petroglyphs and archaeological sites in collaboration other experts, including NT Heritage Officers. The Burra Charter principles and process will guide this assessment.

- **Training** - will be provided for Traditional Owners in cultural site management including rock art preservation techniques.
- **Interpretation** - will aim to increase visitors' awareness of the fragility of the petroglyphs and their help in protecting the petroglyphs.
- **Research** - research into conservation of the engravings will be encouraged.

## 4.2 Natural Heritage Values

### 4.2.1 Natural character

N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park is set in deeply dipping sandstone ranges which rise steeply above the surrounding area. The Gorge has been incised by a minor tributary of the nearby Ross River. The Park contains two gorges: a main gorge about 1.1 km long and a side gorge about 800m long. The creek through N'Dhala Gorge has a catchment which covers roughly 1,400 hectares, although much of this lies outside the Park.

**Native vegetation** - The Park protects a number of plant communities typical of the Eastern MacDonnell Ranges. The Park also provides protection for three plants listed as "vulnerable" nationally under the EPBC Act.

- Undoolya Wattle (*Acacia undoolyana*) is managed under a recovery plan (Nano et al 2007) and is currently only protected in N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park;
- MacDonnell Ranges Cycad (*Macrozamia macdonnellii*), endemic to the central Australian ranges and a relict from a wetter era; and
- Glory of the Centre Wedding Bush (*Ricinocarpos gloria-medii*), endemic to the MacDonnell Bioregion, having been found only in the East MacDonnell Ranges and at

### Simpsons Gap.

**Native animals** - The environment of the Gorge is considered a refuge for many native animals. Some of the larger mammals such as Euros (*Macropus robustus*), Black-footed Rock Wallabies (*Petrogale lateralis*) and Dingoes are commonly found within the Park and over 35 species of birds have been sighted within the Park.

**Managing threatening processes** - Major threats to the natural values of the Park are likely to result from the impact of stock, uncontrolled fire and the activities of people.

**Fire** - Fire has long been a part of the environment and has played a major part in shaping the district's vegetation. However recent, rapidly changed fire regimes fuelled by Buffel and Couch grasses, are damaging the petroglyphs, fire sensitive plant communities and the broader ecosystem. Fire-sensitive plants of the Park include *Acacia undoolyana* Native Figs (*Ficus platypoda*) and White Cypress Pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*).

Long-term management goals in the Park are protecting the sacred sites, petroglyphs, and fire-sensitive plant communities. It is important for senior men to be involved in all fire planning, burning and weed control associated with the sacred sites of the Park. Fire management requires strategic fire breaks and fuel reduction around cultural sites during cooler months, or after rain.

**Weeds and invasive plants** - Sixteen introduced plant species have been recorded within N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park. Buffel Grass and Couch Grass are the highest priority invasive plants for control as they increase the frequency and intensity of fires potentially damaging sacred sites, petroglyphs and fire sensitive vegetation. Buffel Grass extends well into the range country, whilst Couch Grass is found along waterways and the gorges.

**Feral animals** - Large introduced herbivores such as cattle and horses threaten the Park's values by disturbing the vegetation cover and encouraging weed infestation. Other introduced animals known to have occurred in the Park include Cats, Foxes, Rabbits, and European Honey Bees. The northern section of the Park is unfenced and allows stock into the Park. Approximately 3 kilometres of the southern perimeter of the Park is fenced and regularly maintained and as such is effective in excluding stock from the southern section of the Park.

#### **Aims**

- No significant wildfires.
- Low risk of wildfire to fire-sensitive vegetation
- No large introduced herbivores.

#### **Management Directions**

**4.7 District operational strategies (5 yr) and annual operational programs (1 yr)** - Any fire, weed, feral animal and erosion work carried out on the Park will be directed through district operational strategies. They will include all parks of the East MacDonnells district and be prepared approximately every 5 years. Annual operational programs implement the strategies and need only be brief documents specifying the inputs and outputs needed to meet defined strategic targets. Annual operational programs will take due consideration of available resources and priorities at a district and Territory level. Operational management strategies will:

- take an integrated approach between parks and reserves of the East MacDonnell district; and
- focus on key values and set clear 5-10 year targets to attain long-term aims (10-20 years) of this Plan and other Park Plans of the district;

Any management activity on or near sacred sites will be planned and implemented with

senior men. The partners will also work with adjoining landowners and local experts for district planning and management.

The operational management priorities for N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park are to protect the physical integrity of sacred and archaeological sites and fire sensitive vegetation communities.

**4.8 Biodiversity conservation** –will be addressed through district operational strategies and implemented through annual operational programs. Traditional Owners will be involved in biodiversity conservation activities where possible.

- **Conservation management links** - will be encouraged between Park and off-Park lands at a district scale through collaboration with nearby landholders, including Loves Creek and the Gardens pastoral stations to gain better conservation and employment outcomes.

**4.9 Fire management** - will aim to minimise the risk of large wildfires. Strategic fire breaks and fuel reduction burns in fire-tolerant communities may occur during cooler months, or after rain. Park staff who enter Ilwentye past the first waterhole must be accompanied by a senior male Traditional owner.

- **Fire Monitoring** - Fire history and ecological responses to fire will be recorded and entered into relevant, centrally-held databases.

**4.10 Invasive plant management**– Buffel and Couch grasses will be controlled to create breaks in otherwise continuous wildlife-carrying fuel. Park staff who enter Ilwentye past the first waterhole must be accompanied by a senior male Traditional owner.

- **Weed Monitoring** - The risk posed by new weed species outbreaks will be assessed as soon as possible following detection.

**4.11 Feral animal management** – will aim to exclude large introduced herbivores from the Park. Boundary fencing will be maintained and large introduced herbivores removed as soon as possible.

**4.12 Soil conservation** — will aim to minimise disturbance to Park soils.

- **Soil rehabilitation** - Degraded areas will be identified and progressively rehabilitated using specialist advice.

- **Extraction** - Soil, gravel or rocks will not be removed or disturbed except subject to conditions of a Sacred Site Clearance, Heritage approval and a permit issued under the TPWC By-laws as necessary.

## 5. Managing Visitors

The petroglyphs are the Park's principal attraction and the focus of visitor attention. Most of the 5,000 visitors each year enjoy the Park for a few hours only.

### Principles for managing visitor experiences

The joint management partners of N'Dhala recognise that:

- Positive experiences produce satisfied visitors, who may build a sense of connection and responsibility for the Park.
- Visitors' appreciation and respect for the Park is enhanced by sharing information about the Park's unique natural and cultural values.
- Well-designed facilities help protect Park values and promote safe, enjoyable visitor experiences.

### 5.1 Engaging with the Arrernte's living cultural landscape

N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park is a place of reverence and spiritual connection for Traditional Owners. There is an opportunity to promote greater awareness of the Eastern Arrernte's living cultural landscape across the wider East MacDonnell district. However some cultural information is restricted due to its living cultural values.

The partners are keen to improve the presentation of the Park while carefully managing information presented to the public. They hope that by encouraging visitors to the site that non-Aboriginal people will gain a better appreciation of its importance and respect for its traditions.

**Local tourism** - Traditional Owners seek the opportunity to develop niche tourism operations and share their stories with visitors. The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee will help provide a consistent platform for the partners and the wider community to exchange ideas, develop tourism opportunities and reinforce progress.

The partners will actively seek the assistance from NT Government agencies associated with tourism, employment and training, as well as the CLC to support Traditional Owners who seek to develop tourism enterprises.

**Cultural restrictions** - Warning signs should be clearly presented on the access road and walking track to warn Aboriginal visitors that N'Dhala Gorge is an important men's sacred site and dangerous for Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men.

**Park access** - Access to the Park is via a public track beginning near the Ross River Resort and passing along the Ross River valley through Loves Creek Station. The track terminates in a small unsealed car park and camp ground about ten kilometres from the Resort at the south-east end of the Park.

The vehicle track to the Park is unsealed and extremely sandy in places, especially where there are river crossings, and is therefore recommended for use by four-wheel-drive vehicles only. Visitors need to be forewarned of the difficulties involved in accessing the Park, particularly after local flooding.

The condition of these roads affects visitor access and limits visitor numbers. The Ross River may flow after heavy rains making the track impassable.



All vehicles should be restricted to the road and car park to avoid damage to the fragile environment at the site.

### **Facilities**

*Walking track* - Presently one marked walking track leads from the Visitor Zone for approximately one kilometre up the main gorge and returns along the same route. The definition of the track deteriorates along its length however there are regular directional markers. The track generally follows the path of the stream bed and walkers must negotiate rocky sections along the way.

Extreme care and vigilance must be taken when reforming tracks that rocks containing petroglyphs or fossils are not removed or damaged in any way. The track leads visitors through the Gorge avoiding hazardous areas, rocky sections, vulnerable plants, sacred sites and petroglyphs liable to be damaged.

*Camping and picnicking* – The Park provides limited overnight camping opportunities for visitors seeking an attractive and secluded alternative to the nearby Ross River Resort and Trepkina Gorge camping grounds. Existing facilities include a few picnic tables with barbeques, toilet, and three individual campsites. The facilities are basic but adequate for current visitation. Any upgraded facilities should be designed to only require low maintenance.

Out of respect for the sacred sites and to protect the petroglyphs Traditional Owners require visitors to stay on the walking track and not drink alcohol beyond the campground. Camping and camp fires are restricted to designated sites in the visitor zone.

**Interpretation** - Public knowledge helps promote appreciation and respect, and reduces the risk of unintentional damage. The walking track leads visitors to two rock engravings where the sacred site begins. An unmarked track continues through the sacred area, however, visitors are left with no information about its importance to Traditional Owners.

Traditional Owners are interested in promoting the Park as a place of cultural and spiritual importance. However, given the spiritual significance of the site senior men will not consent to any publication or broadcasting of images or film associated with sacred sites.

Within N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park interpretation should:

- Be integrated with other parks and reserves of the East MacDonnell Ranges;
- Remain focused on the Park's living cultural values and petroglyphs; and
- Carefully manage information and images to ensure Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men do not see explicit images or photographs of the petroglyphs.

**Safety** - All visitor activity on the Park carries some risk of injury. Rangers are trained in emergency response and first aid, and regularly patrol to monitor facilities and visitor behaviour. Facilities are maintained to the highest practicable standards for visitor safety. A district Emergency Response Plan, which is reviewed annually provides Rangers with clear direction in an emergency.

### **Aims**

- Traditional Owners participating in the local tourism industry.
- Visitors enjoy themselves, are safe and highly satisfied.

### **Management Directions**

**5.1 Park presentation** - The joint management partners will actively seek the assistance of Tourism NT, Tourism Central Australia and other agencies to ensure N'Dhala Gorge is promoted consistent with its values as a sacred site.

**5.2 Indigenous tourism** – At a district level, the partners will work with the tourism industry, Central Land Council and local operators to foster Aboriginal employment in tourism and assist development of local Indigenous tourism enterprise.

**5.3 Visitor interpretation** – The Partners will develop an interpretation strategy and annual operational program for the East MacDonnell district. They will invest in moderate levels of interpretation in the Park and deliver community education where possible.

- **Visitor Information** – will encourage petroglyphs protection and understanding of the sites cultural importance. Orientation material will be used to guide visitors to the main viewing sites and away from fragile or vulnerable petroglyphs.
- **Image restrictions** - To the best of their ability, the partners will manage information and images of N'Dhala Gorge to ensure Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men do not read about or see images of the petroglyphs from the site. The partners will not consent to any publication or broadcasting of images or film of sacred sites.
- **Tour operator and tour guide support** – Material will be provided to tour operators, so they can provide accurate and appropriate information about the Park's values. Opportunities to Traditional Owners to train operators will also be explored.
- **Monitoring** - Information shared with the public will be monitored by senior men and through consultations with the CLC.

**5.4 Visitor access** - The road will be maintained to reduce the risk of erosion. All vehicle and foot traffic will be restricted to the formed road and walking path.

- **Cultural warnings** – will be established at the Park entrance on the access road to warn visitors that N'Dhala Gorge is an important men's sacred site with significant cultural restrictions with penalties for infringement.
- **Four-wheel-drive access** - The track will be retained as a four-wheel-drive standard. Visitors will be advised of the standard of access at the Ross River Junction by a cautionary sign. All vehicle traffic will be restricted to formed roads which will be constructed to appropriate standards to minimise undesirable impacts.
- **Road closures** - In the event of flooding of the Ross River, the track may be closed to public access by agencies responsible for roads and infrastructure until safely passable. The Park or areas within it may also be temporarily closed to the public for fire, rehabilitation works and important ceremonies. These infrequent events will be appropriately publicised.
- **Road maintenance** - The partners will actively seek the assistance from the relevant road management and soil conservation advisory branches within the Northern Territory Government, to determine the most appropriate techniques to upgrade and maintain road access, reduce erosion and minimise the impact of flooding on visitor access.
- **Pets** - Entry of pets will be consistent with existing Parks and Wildlife policy.

**5.5 Visitor facilities** – Current facilities will be maintained to provide a moderate standard of service to visitors, and subject to resources upgrades will be to a general design standard. Management and maintenance of the campground and picnic area may be outsourced.

- **Future development** – The East MacDonnell's Joint Management Committee will annually endorse rolling five-year works plans and site development for parks and reserves for the district. Decisions will be made in accordance with structures and processes outlined in section 2.
- **Walking track** – Visitors will be encouraged to keep to the walking track. The track may be rehabilitated and maintained to a Class 4 standard (AS 2156.1-2001), depending on available resources. This standard enables visitors to walk in a slightly modified natural environment where interpretation and facilities are not common. Off-track exploration of the

Park will be discouraged.

- **Camping and campfires** – Due to low-use the partners will review the provision of camping facilities in the Park. In the interim the camping area will be maintained to provide 'bush style' camping. Camping and open fires are only permitted in designated sites. The collection of firewood inside the Park is not permitted. Signs will inform visitors of regulations concerning the use of fires within the Park. Private generators will not be permitted in the campground.

- **Rubbish** – No bins will be provided and visitors will be encouraged to take their rubbish with them.

#### **5.6 Other activities**

- **Rock climbing, abseiling and mountain-bike riding** – will not be permitted in the Park.

- **Alcohol** – Signs will be placed asking visitors not to drink alcohol outside the campground.

**5.7 Visitor safety** – The Emergency Response Plan for parks and reserves of the district will be reviewed annually. Identified risks will be rectified on a priority basis and rangers will receive appropriate training. Tour operators will be encouraged to report incidents and safety issues to Park Operations.

## Appendix 1. Selected performance indicators

These performance indicators are an additional tool to assist the joint management partners to measure the success of management. They are not the only measures of success and other measures may be developed over time. There is a reasonable expectation that they will be achieved, if not year by year, then over the longer term of this plan. When indicators are not achieved, the reasons need to be established and steps taken to improve outcomes.

Aims	Performance Indicators	Targets	Means
<b>Managing Visitors</b>			
Visitors enjoy themselves; be safe and highly satisfied.	Visitor satisfaction Number of safety related incidents	90% Low	Visitor surveys for specific requirements
Traditional Owners participating in the tourism industry.	Traditional Owner satisfaction	High	Partner satisfaction monitoring (see Mgt. Dir. 2.4).
<b>Managing Country</b>			
Traditional Owners satisfied with the protection of cultural sites.	Traditional Owner satisfaction.	High	Partner satisfaction monitoring.
Archaeological sites protected and monitored.	Conservation standards (to be determined with Heritage Branch).	High	Ongoing record-keeping, reporting and review.
No significant wildfires and low risk to fire-sensitive vegetation.	Area burnt in fire-tolerant vegetation communities Area burnt in fire-sensitive vegetation	> 5% annually < 10% over 10 years in total	Fire mapping, ongoing data management and review.
No large introduced herbivores	Presence of large introduced herbivores Existing boundary fence maintained	Nil Stock proof	Opportunistic sightings.
<b>Park Governance</b>			
Equitable partnership with effective governance.	Joint Management Partners Satisfied with: - Communication and Engagement - Representation and Decision-making processes - Building capacity	High	Partner satisfaction monitoring. Ongoing record-keeping, reporting and review.
The Aims and Directions in this Plan are achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities.	Achievement of Aims and Management Directions in this plan Implementation of strategies and annual operational programs	Outcomes realised % of priority actions completed	Partner satisfaction monitoring. Ongoing record-keeping, reporting and review.



# Trephina Gorge Nature Park

## Joint Management Plan October 2011



Trephina Gorge Nature Park Joint Management Plan

Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory, Department of Natural Resources,  
Environment, The Arts and Sport

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This plan was prepared by Parks and Wildlife and Traditional Owners with assistance from the Central Land Council. Planning for formal joint management began with a series of meetings between Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife staff and Central Land Council staff in 2007. Traditional Owners and Parks have discussed how to work together and manage the Park at meetings, country visits and camps over the past three years. This Plan is the culmination of several years of hard work and negotiation by the partners to establish an effective and appropriate way to look after this picturesque country.

## Executive Summary

Trephina Gorge Nature Park is located 85 kilometres east of Alice Springs and one of the most popular parks in the East MacDonnells district, attracting about 20,000 visitors each year. The Park is scenically beautiful with sheer quartzite cliffs and River Red Gum-lined water courses. It is jointly managed between Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife.

Trephina Gorge Nature Park's primary values are that it is a picturesque low-key family escape, easily accessible from Alice Springs. It is recognised as a 'quiet alternative' to the more popular West MacDonnells National Park as it provides nature based recreational experiences including sightseeing, picnicking, bush walking, camping and swimming. The Park is also part of a living cultural landscape where the ancestors of Traditional Owners still live in totemic sites across the Park. The natural values of the Park have some conservation significance; however the Park's contribution to conservation in the context of the NT Reserve system is relatively small.

The main objectives of Park management are to maintain a low-key bush setting that provides an outdoor family escape with opportunities for passive nature-based recreation; protect specific conservation values of the Park and to build effective governance which empowers Traditional Owners and successfully manages the Park.

Key issues within the Park include reviewing the standards of visitor service and functionality of the campgrounds, and wildfires encouraged by introduced grasses.

The Park will receive a moderate level of management input from park operations. There is scope for the partners to explore options to improve the campgrounds, to expand Indigenous employment associated with the district and foster collaboration with adjacent landowners, such as Loves Creek.

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# Vision for the Park

## “Working together as one”

Both partners will work together to manage the Park, respecting and acknowledging each others’ skills and knowledge, and communicating clearly. A strong partnership will mean:

- Country is looked after properly for current and future generations;
- Traditional Owners are actively involved through jobs, training and business opportunities; and
- Visitors gain a deeper understanding of the country and its people.

## 1. Introduction

Trephina Gorge Nature Park is 1,771 hectares in size set in a spectacular part of the East MacDonnell Ranges, 85 kilometres east of Alice Springs (see Map 1) and located on the eastern portion of Australia’s Red Centre National Landscape. Access is via the Ross Highway and over 20,000 visitors use the Park every year.

The Park is fundamentally important to Traditional Owners looking after their country. The Park contains significant sacred sites for Eastern Arrernte people including Alherrkentye (Trephina Gorge) and Atneperrke (John Hayes Rockhole).

In December 1870 the first Europeans visited Trephina Gorge when John Ross’ Overland Telegraph Line survey team explored the area. Tourism first began to influence the area when Ross River Homestead Tourist Park opened nearby in 1959. It is thought the Park was named after Tryphena Benstead, wife of William Benstead the first licensee of the Stuart Arms Hotel, and one of the pioneer station managers and store keepers in the area.

The Park was originally part of ‘The Garden Station’ pastoral lease. In 1965 Trephina Gorge was protected under the National Parks and Gardens Ordinance (RES 1160 22/07/1965). In 1966 it was placed under care, control and management of the NT Reserves Board. The Park was later gazetted under section 12 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* (TPWC Act) on 30 June 1978 (NTGG 26A 30/06/1978).

In 2003, Trephina Gorge Nature was included in Schedule 1 of the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*, allowing the Northern Territory and Traditional Owners to enter into formal joint management of the park. In 2009, title was transferred to the Atnerrperrke Aboriginal Land Trust to be held on trust for the Traditional Owners and was leased to the Northern Territory for 99 years.

### 1.1 Purpose

#### 1.1.1 Values of the Park

The key values for the Park are:

- Provides for **low-key bush tourism** - easily accessed from Alice Springs and an alternative to the more popular ‘Red Centre Way’ associated with the West MacDonnells and opportunity for ‘spirited adventures’ to get off the beaten track. Nature based recreational experiences including sightseeing, picnicking, bush walking,

camping and swimming.

- Supports a **living cultural landscape** - Trephina Gorge Nature Park is part of this extensive living cultural landscape in which knowledge is transmitted through the dreaming stories of totemic ancestors (Altyerre). Pwenye (Traditional Owners) remain connected to these ancestors who still reside in totemic sites across the Park.
- Supports **regionally significant biodiversity values** - within the internationally significant MacDonnell Bioregion. It contains some values of national conservation significance; however its contribution to conservation is relatively minor.

### 1.1.2 Purpose of the Park

Trephina Gorge Nature Park (see Map 2) will be managed to retain its natural character, and protect its cultural and natural resources and heritage, while at the same time providing opportunities for visitors to enjoy the landscape and wildlife. Priorities will be to:

- Protect the natural and cultural resources of the Park.
- Maintain a low-key bush setting that provides an outdoor family escape with opportunities for passive nature-based recreation.
- Meet the needs of Traditional Owners to maintain their connection to country and be involved in management and on ground operations.

### 1.1.3 Purpose of the Plan

This Plan gives direction to the day-to-day management of the Park. It also provides the primary source against which management performance will be measured. Management success will be defined by performance measures developed by the Partners (see Appendix 1). They are specific, measurable, achievable and repeatable and will primarily be implemented through operational strategies and annual programs and reviewed by the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee.

This joint management plan supersedes the 1994 Plan of Management. It will remain in effect until amended or replaced by a new plan. Further responsibilities regarding the joint management of the Park are set out in the Park Lease.

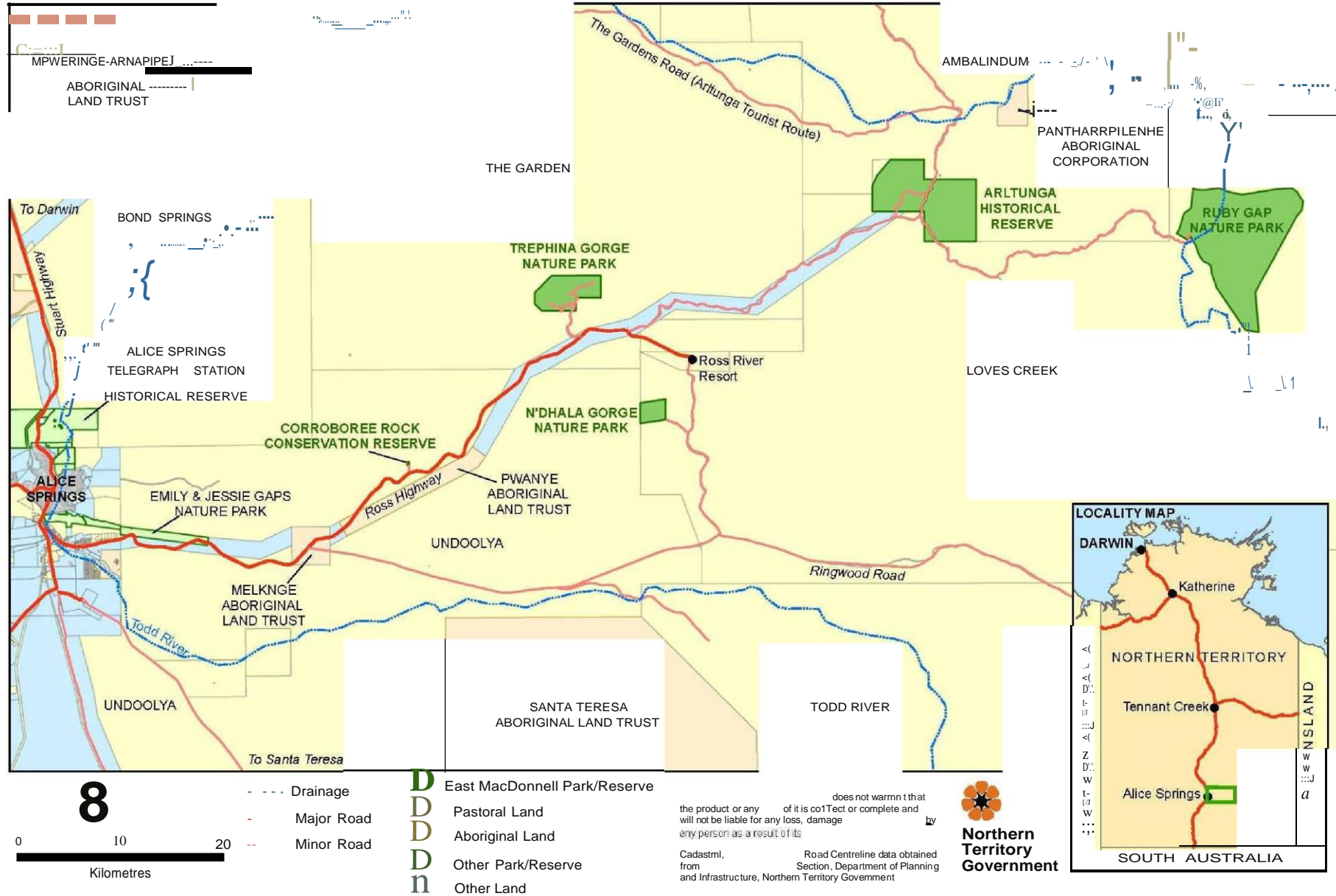
This Plan is closely linked to other joint management plans of the East MacDonnells district including N'Dhala Nature Park, Corroboree Rock Conservation Area, Ruby Gap Nature Park and Artunga Historical Reserve and should be considered with them.

Similar Joint Management Plans are concurrently being prepared for N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park and Trephina Gorge Nature Park in the East MacDonnells district. These plans have been developed separately for practical and cultural reasons, including restrictions associated with Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve and N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park. However, the joint management plans of the district will operate under the East MacDonnell Joint Management Committee.

This joint management plan was prepared in accordance with, and complies with, the TPWC Act, the Park Lease and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) registered with the National Native Title Tribunal pursuant to the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*. The Plan has force in law under the TPWC Act.

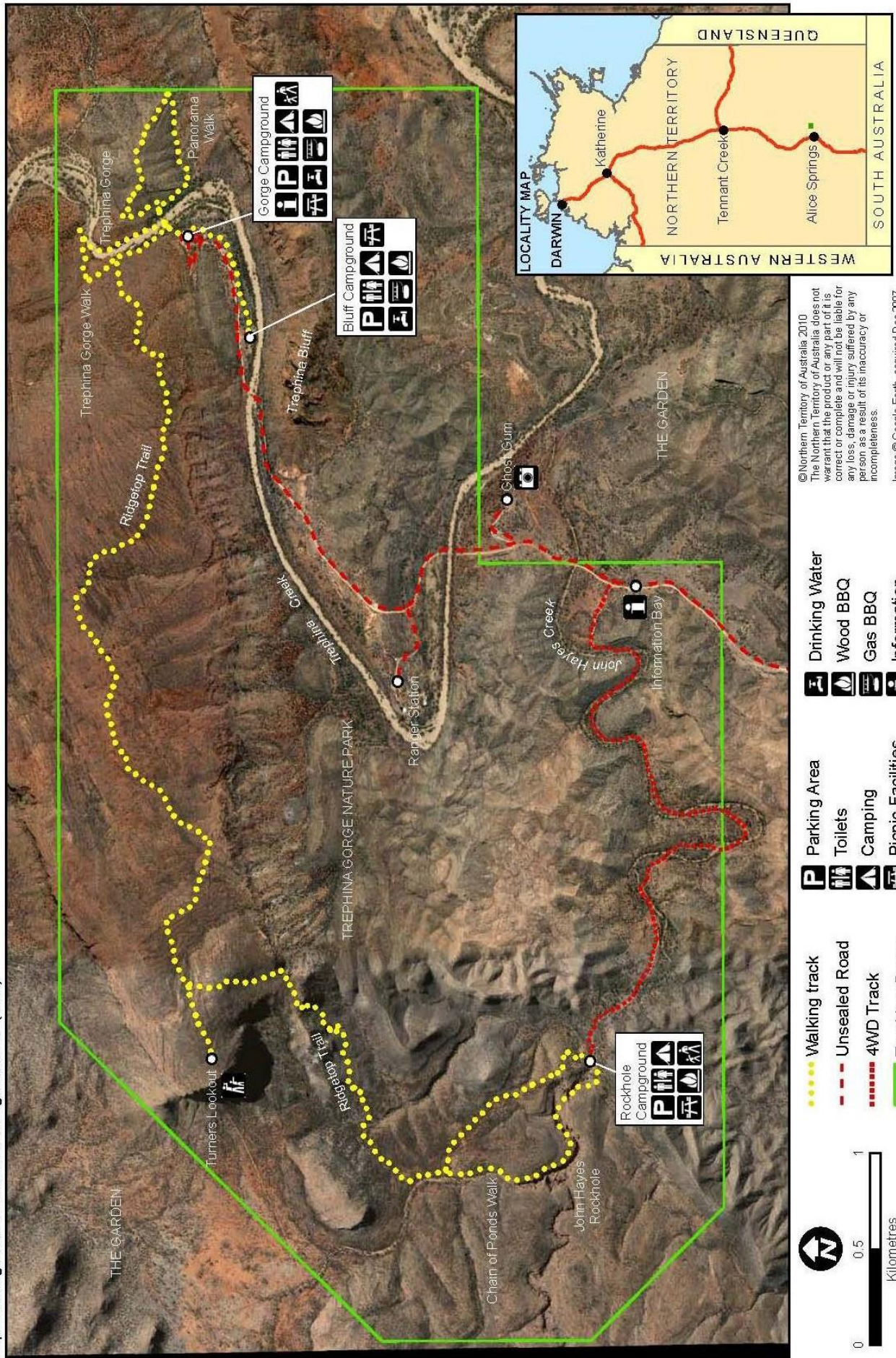
The land subject to this Joint Management Plan includes Portion No. 00776 held by the Atnerrperrke Aboriginal Land Trust on behalf of Traditional Owners.

**Map 1. Location Map, Parks and Reserves of the East MacDonnell Ranges  
Trepina Gorge Nature Park Joint Management Plan (Draft)**





Map 2. Park Map  
Trephina Gorge Nature Park Joint Management Plan (Draft)



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Images © Google Earth, acquired Dec 2007

- Walking track
- Unsealed Road
- 4WD Track
- Trephina Gorge Nature Park
- North
- 0 0.5 1 Kilometres
- Parking Area
- Toilets
- Camping
- Picnic Facilities
- Short Walks
- Drinking Water
- Wood BBQ
- Gas BBQ
- Information
- Photo Opportunity

## 1.2 Joint Management

Joint Management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service working together, exchanging their knowledge and expertise, solving problems and sharing decisions.

Trephina Gorge Nature Park is Aboriginal land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* (ALRA). Traditional Owners have agreed to lease the land back to the Territory for 99 years and work together to manage the Park. The terms of joint management for the Park have authority in law under the TPWC Act, the Park Lease and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) registered under the *Native Title Act*. This Plan complies with all of these legal instruments.

Under section 25AA of the TPWC Act the joint management partners for Trephina Gorge Nature Park are the Territory and the Traditional Owners of the park. The Territory will generally carry out its joint management obligations through the Parks and Wildlife Service. For the purposes of this Joint Management Plan, references to the Parks and Wildlife Service as a Joint Management Partner should be read as including a reference to the Territory.

### 1.2.1 Traditional Owners

Traditionally Trephina Gorge is known as Alherrkentye, meaning Lightning Place. Pwenye is the Eastern Arrernte name for the long hill south of the Ross Highway stretching east from the Numery Road turnoff to N'Dhala Gorge; it is also the name Traditional Owners use to refer to themselves as part of their country. Neighbouring 'countries' or 'estates' are Antulye to the west, Uytetye to the south, Ulpmer to the north, Uleralkwe to the east.

Ancestral tracks and song lines traverse these estates, linking Aboriginal people in the region and sometimes, right across the country. Arrernte kin relations, known as anpernirrentye or 'skin names,' allow individuals to be placed in a social framework which guides every person's behaviour to others within that system. Anpernirrentye also incorporates a system of descent and inheritance, where children inherit a skin name in line with their father's anyenhenge (father / child skin names).

People descended from a paternal grandfather and his brothers are referred to as apmerekke-artweye. They are the recognised holders of an estate or country with the right to make decisions affecting the use of that country; the responsibility of looking after that country; and the accountability to the land itself and the spirits of their ancestors still present in the landscape. Traditionally, failure to comply with these responsibilities could result in sickness or death, so that when a person becomes sick, it is often attributed to neglecting their country.

Apmerekke-artweye are assisted in their role as owners by their kwertengerle – people who hold a different connection to the same country, often through their mother's father or mother's brother. Kwertengerle can become the holders of knowledge with significant ritual responsibilities and are considered essential partners for discussing any issues affecting that country. Together the Apmerekke-artweye and Kwertengerle care for the land, exercising complementary roles and responsibilities. Anthropologists will often refer to this group as the estate group.

There are a number of other factors that play a significant role in assuming positions of authority or seniority within a group related to an estate, principally, residence and knowledge of country, aknganeme (conception or 'borning' place), gender and involvement in ritual activity. Personality and level of interest are also relevant factors for the exercise of authority over an estate. These factors are often played out in the secret/sacred arena of traditional ceremony. The recognition of seniority from the broader

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group is important to consider in the context of joint management.

Traditional Law is transmitted through the dreaming stories of the totemic ancestors, or the Altyerre. Layers of meaning encoded into the stories and songs are gradually revealed at various stages throughout a person's life. Sacred objects, songs, designs and dramatic acts have been left behind by the spirit ancestors to transmit this knowledge. Young children are taught the 'open' or public versions of these stories, and may attend certain stages of some ceremonies. Some men will eventually become akngerrtye (senior men) - a status that is recognised by other members of the group and not one that a person can independently assume. Ceremony is traditionally the arena in which decision-making occurs. These ceremonies are usually held between October and March.

For Arrernte traditional owners, Trephina Gorge contains sacred sites and remains an important place despite the impact of colonisation. There are many sacred sites of strong cultural significance across the East MacDonnell Ranges. Some are places along an Ancestral track where a particular event happened that is commemorated in traditional songs and ceremonies; some have local dreaming stories that are not part of a travelling song-line; and some others are named places where old people camped in the early days. There are Ancestral dreaming stories that traverse the East MacDonnell Ranges. For example, Caterpillar ancestors are embodied as the East MacDonnell Ranges themselves – some of the Gaps along the Ranges being where they fought and had their heads bitten off. Another dreaming, Anthepe (Dancing Women), travels from the west along the foothills of the East MacDonnell Ranges. The white ghost gums on the side of the hills near Ross River Homestead are the embodiment of the Dancing Women themselves.

Most Traditional Owners for Trephina Gorge Nature Park live in Santa Teresa, Amoonguna and Alice Springs. The closest residential area to the Park is Williams Well Outstation, approximately 25 kilometres to the west off the Ross Highway.

### **1.2.2 The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service**

The Parks and Wildlife Service is dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural values of parks and reserves, while providing high-quality nature-based tourism and recreation opportunities for visitors. The Service is committed to engaging the public and working with the interests of the community. The Parks and Wildlife Service is committed to seeing that the joint management partnership grows and becomes truly equitable and that Traditional Owners benefit culturally, socially and economically from joint management.

This Plan has been developed by the joint management partners in a positive spirit. Like the Traditional Owners of the Park, the Parks and Wildlife Service is optimistic about the future.

## **2. Park Governance**

Joint management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service working together to achieve their shared goals and aspirations, exchanging knowledge and expertise solving problems together and sharing decisions. A mutual understanding of country, Law, culture and Indigenous decision-making principles are fundamental to making good joint management decisions. For the purpose of joint management, the term governance is defined as "the way the partners organise themselves and the rules they put in place to realise their shared vision." It includes all aspects of partnership, communication, planning and decision-making.



Making sure that the joint management partners have a clear structure and process for making decisions is essential for good joint management. The partners are optimistic that this new way of learning and working together improve management equity. Both partners acknowledge that it will take time and support to build capacity and a strong working relationship.

## **Principles for effective governance**

- Decision-making and accountability should be equally shared.
- Time spent together on country is important for developing mutual trust, respect and understanding between the partners.
- Indigenous decision-making processes must be respected.
- Management priorities will be guided by the Park's key values.
- Planning and decision-making must incorporate risk identification and minimisation.
- Engagement and employment of Traditional Owners in management operations is central to joint management success.
- Resources are limited and must be used effectively.
- Joint management has to be checked to see that it is working well. It is important to keep improving.
- Public support for joint management is very important.

## **2.1 Planning and decision-making**

### **2.1.1 A partnership approach**

Joint management provides exciting new opportunities to make better management decisions based on a combination of Indigenous and western approaches to land management. Successful joint management relies on meaningful engagement with Traditional Owners and will be measured against the achievement of the aims in this Plan and the satisfaction of the joint management partners.

For Traditional Owners of Trepkina Gorge Nature Park it is fundamental that appropriate senior people are involved in making decisions related to their country. Across the East MacDonnell district different groups of Traditional Owners maintain responsibility for different areas of country which includes the Park. Traditional Owners emphasise the importance of ensuring decision-making structures reflect the differing responsibility between different family groups.

It is important to acknowledge that Traditional Owners' values and perceptions in relation to looking after country do not always line up with conventional park management approaches. Their perception of joint management is strongly influenced by what they value most highly – Aboriginal law and extended family. Respecting these differences will significantly assist the partnership and provides the basis for effective joint management and governance of the Park.

Accordingly, decision-making will be structured so that the people whose country is affected are well-informed about park operations and are involved in decisions. Working in a cross-cultural environment requires mutual trust and respect as well as clear communication at all levels. A shared understanding of country, culture and indigenous decision-making principles are fundamental to making good joint management decisions.

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## 2.1.2 Roles and responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities are essential for joint management and each of the partners have responsibilities for looking after the Park in accordance with traditional Aboriginal laws and laws applicable in the Northern Territory (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

- A **Joint Management Committee** is intended to be the principal governing body for parks and reserves of the East MacDonnells district, including N'Dhala Gorge and Trephina Gorge Nature Parks. The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee's primary functions are to provide strategic direction to Park operations, determine local policy and procedures, and review progress against management directions in this plan. The Committee will be composed of representatives nominated by the main Traditional Owner families and senior Parks and Wildlife staff. It is hoped that centralising management between all reserves of the East MacDonnells to a single Joint Management Committee will increase management efficiency and effectiveness across the district.
- **Traditional Owners** provide an essential contribution to the direction and management of the Park. Core members of family groups have responsibilities for decision-making and overseeing cultural protocols.
- Traditional Owners also have responsibilities for managing traditional knowledge and passing it on to the right people, looking after the land and its resources, maintaining sacred sites and keeping the country alive. Traditional Owners are responsible to the land, law and culture.
- The **Parks and Wildlife Service** is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Park under the direction of the Joint Management Committee. The Parks and Wildlife Service is required to finance and resource the Park's ongoing management including administrative functions, staffing, infrastructure and services in accordance with the Park Lease, Indigenous Land Use Agreement and any relevant laws. Park employees are responsible to the Minister for Parks and Wildlife and the Northern Territory Government.
- The **Central Land Council** (CLC) are responsible for representing and protecting the interests of the Traditional Owners in the Park's management under the TPWC Act. Specifically they are to represent and support Traditional Owners' interests, undertake consultations, assist with monitoring joint management processes, and help resolve differences between Traditional Owners, if needed.

All joint management decisions will be consistent with any relevant laws in force in the Northern Territory, with the Park Lease and Indigenous Land Use Agreement, and with any relevant Northern Territory Government policies or guidelines.

## 2.1.3 Building effective governance and continuous improvement

The partners recognise the need for training to build effective governance. Traditional Owners are willing to teach Rangers and visitors cross-cultural skills, language and Aboriginal land management techniques. Rangers are prepared to share their knowledge of planning, budgeting, organisational structures and resource management with Traditional Owners.

The partners are also committed to continuous learning and improvement. The process involves tracking progress against performance measures, evaluating results and purposely modifying management to reflect new knowledge and insights (see Appendix 1). It also involves monitoring to measure efficiencies, improved effectiveness and progress toward long-term aims.

## 2.1.4 Community engagement and participation

Good working relationships with landholders situated between the five parks and reserves of the East MacDonnells may increase management effectiveness across the district. Matters of mutual concern include fencing, boundary access, control of stock and feral animals, weed control, fire management and to some extent, visitor access and safety.

Working with stakeholders and neighbours for mutual benefit expands the positive influence of the Park beyond its immediate boundary. Forums such as the 'Desert Guides' network provides an example where commercial tour guides and Rangers share information and work collaboratively to best serve visitors across the district.

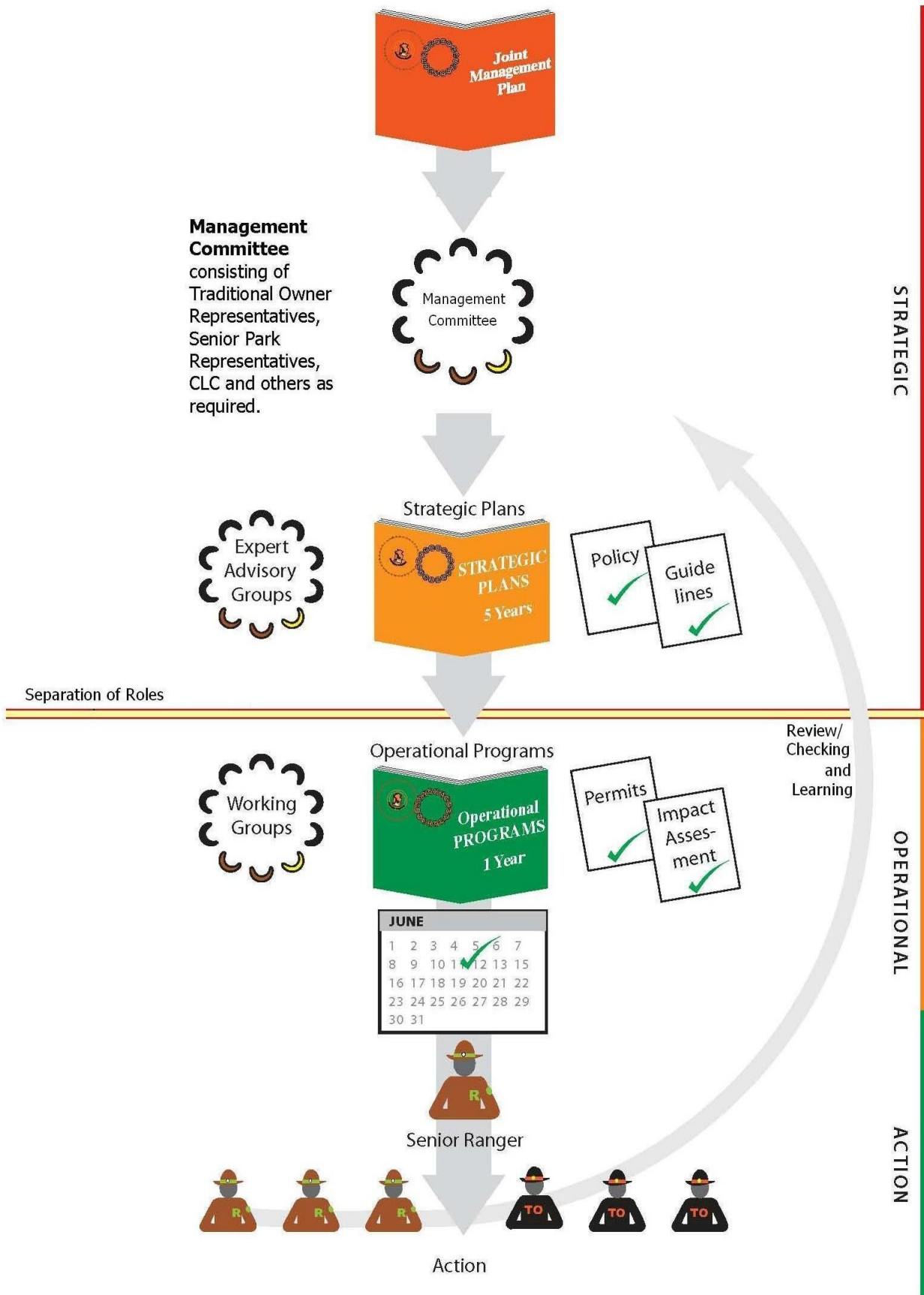
There are no immediate proposals to expand the Park. The vision of a "greater park" linking the West MacDonnell National Park, Corroboree Conservation Reserve and N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park has been investigated from time to time over the last three decades. Such a vision may become a reality in time through co-operative arrangements with neighbouring landholders such as Loves Creek, Undoolya and The Garden pastoral stations.

The Park is enjoyed by a wide variety of user groups and is an important part of the local community. Many special interest groups enjoy the Park including bushwalking and running clubs, choirs, field naturalists, and school and religious groups. It is important that these groups are given opportunities to voice their interests and provide feedback about the Park.

**Table 1.** Decision-making Framework.

East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee Representatives from Traditional Owners and Senior Parks and Wildlife Staff	Park Operations Parks Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise executive authority and be accountable for the management of the Park.</li> <li>• Set strategic direction and park-specific policy and procedure for management programs and staff to implement.</li> <li>• Approve work programs and internal annual budgets.</li> <li>• Establish development directions and criteria to evaluate proposals.</li> <li>• Consult with senior men responsible for the sacred site.</li> <li>• Communicate with, and provide feedback from, the groups that members represent.</li> <li>• Provide a link with the key stakeholders and wider community for the East MacDonnell district.</li> <li>• Monitor and review management performance.</li> <li>• Consider other proposals not specified in this plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for day-to-day management of the Park.</li> <li>• Implement operational programs, policy and procedure as approved by the management committee.</li> <li>• Maximise on-ground participation of Traditional Owners in management of the Park.</li> <li>• Report progress to the management committee.</li> <li>• Liaise with stakeholders and neighbours.</li> <li>• Issue permits, contracts and licenses according to policy and procedures.</li> <li>• Monitor management effectiveness and adjust management according to new information, improved procedures, new technology and new threats or issues.</li> </ul>

Figure 1 Park Management and Operations – Roles and Responsibilities



## **Aim**

- Equitable management partnership with effective governance that makes well-informed decisions.
- A park managed for the wider public interest with strong community support.

## **Management Directions**

**2.1 Joint Management Committee** – A single Joint Management Committee will oversee operational management of parks and reserves in the East MacDonnell district, including N'Dhala Gorge and Trepkina Nature Parks.

- **Role** - The role of the East MacDonnell's Management Committee is to provide direction and policy. The Committee will not have a direct role in day-to-day operations. The Committee will represent the interests of Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife. As an initial priority, the partners will formally define and document all aspects of their roles, as well as the rules and processes to effectively govern the Park.
- **Meetings** - The East MacDonnell's Management Committee will meet at least once a year.
- **Membership** – The Committee will consist of at least three Traditional Owners representing estate groups associated with nominated parks and reserves of the East MacDonnell district, including:
  - at least two Senior Government Officers,
  - at least one Land Council Officer, and
  - other persons invited by the partners to provide advice on particular issues or to represent community interests (for example the tourism industry).

**2.2 Making decisions** – Decisions will be made by consensus. The roles and decision-making responsibilities of the Committee are summarised in Table 2.

**2.3 Expert advisory groups and working groups** – Working groups of Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife staff, CLC officers and specialists may be formed to support the Committee or address specific tasks, such as for fire management or tourism advice.

**2.4 Supporting and building effective governance** - The partners and CLC recognise that joint management will be a process of continuous learning and improvement. In the future, other governance arrangements may be refined to increase effectiveness.

- **Representation** - The CLC will represent and support Traditional Owners' interests and facilitate consultations when required.
- **Governance training** – Governance training will be provided to the joint management partners to give them the tools and skills to work effectively in the partnership, with attention given to needs identified by the participatory monitoring and evaluation program.
- **Professional development** – Professional standards and staff competencies will be supported by ongoing training in all aspects of park management with special emphasis on cross-cultural training involving Traditional Owners.
- **Information exchange** – A key role of committee members will be to bring to the Committee the collective expertise, interests and concerns of their group. Committee members will be responsible for passing on information to the wider Traditional Owner group, local community and key stakeholders. The CLC will provide support if required.

Park operations will be responsible for effectively communicating information about Park management programs to the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee.

- **Continuous learning and improvement** – A monitoring and evaluation program will be developed and will help develop effective governance. Performance will be measured annually using indicators (see Appendix 1) relating to:
  - The satisfaction of the partners;
  - The effectiveness of the partnership (including decision-making processes, participation and communication); and
  - The implementation of this Plan.
- **Dispute resolution** – The partners will aim to resolve disputes through open discussion and communication, involving the CLC as required or requested by the Traditional Owners. However, should a dispute arise between the partners that cannot be resolved, the parties will follow the dispute resolution processes set out in the Park Lease.

**2.5 Community engagement and participation** – The partners will build partnerships and linkages with neighbouring landholders, non-Government organisations and the local community to improve conservation and nature-based visitor experiences both on- and off-park.

- **Neighbours** - The partners will work with neighbours and local community groups to address mutual interests. Such groups will be invited to work strategically with the partners on conservation and tourism planning, to resolve common issues and develop opportunities, including those that are linked to the Park but lie outside the boundary.
- **Informed Community** - The partners will keep the community and stakeholders informed about significant issues and proposed developments.
- **Aboriginal Employment** - The partners will be proactive in developing local solutions for Aboriginal employment. Aboriginal employment will remain a standing item at Committee meetings.
- **Tourism Industry** - The partners will be proactive in working with the tourism industry through established forums and organisations such as Tourism Central Australia and Tourism NT and development will remain a standing item at Committee meetings.
- **Volunteers** - Volunteers will be encouraged on the basis that it will not compromise or compete with Traditional Owners' aspirations or opportunities.

## 2.2 Business Operations

### 2.2.1 Effective operations

Park operations are currently carried out by Park Rangers based at Trephina Gorge Nature Park with regular patrols to the Park. It is hoped that day-to-day management will be carried out by both Rangers and Traditional Owners in the future. At present almost all funding to manage the Park is provided by the Northern Territory Government from funding appropriated to manage the Northern Territory's Parks estate. Major works and ongoing programs are subject to Territory-wide government priorities.

On-ground work in parks and reserves across the East MacDonnells is directed by a hierarchy of strategies and operational programs that are developed to achieve the long-term aims included in this and related Plans. The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee will be responsible for endorsing long-term strategies and overseeing operational programs implemented by Rangers, Traditional Owners, contractors and

volunteers. The Committee's role will be to match priorities and new information with available staff and budgets to best achieve the Park's long-term aims and vision.

### **2.2.2 Indigenous training, employment and enterprise development**

Joint management will promote opportunities for employment and business for Traditional Owners across the East MacDonnell district. Traditional Owners emphasise how important training and employment is for their families and acknowledge their responsibility to support young people. They look forward to new opportunities in working on country and applying their skills, knowledge and expertise to better look after the Park.

Since the establishment of new joint management arrangements in the East MacDonnells, Traditional Owners have participated in paid park management programs on a flexible basis. Such flexible, project-based employment provides many benefits including work experience, skills exchange and accredited training, and helps build positive working relationships between Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife staff. Where necessary, it helps Traditional Owners become work-ready and local Aboriginal organisations, including community ranger groups, contract-ready.

Traditional Owners also identified a range of employment opportunities during planning meetings including park and community rangers, tour guides and family tourism businesses. It is important to acknowledge that the broader employment aspirations of Traditional Owners and their families cannot be met by joint management alone. Opportunities will be further limited if efforts are limited to the Park in isolation. Consequently, employment and training initiatives developed by the partners will need to be developed within a local and district context and involve other groups and organisations.

While most maintenance on the Park is carried out by Rangers, contractors are increasingly used to carry out on-ground work. Contract work on the Park includes cleaning campgrounds, sign and facility repairs and maintenance, walking track construction and maintenance, and fencing. Traditional Owners are keen to be involved in contract work. Preference will be given to Traditional Owners of the park to participate in any commercial activities approved under the lease, subject to any law in force in the Northern Territory. Where capacity is lacking, the partners will work with local Aboriginal people to build confidence, provide exposure, knowledge and opportunities to gain experience.

Parks in the East MacDonnell Ranges provide an excellent opportunity for Traditional Owners to present their living culture from a personal perspective, to visitors from all over Australia and the world. Joint management and liaison with the tourism industry can help develop cultural tourism.

Access by Aboriginal Rangers, contractors and trainees to sacred sites should be carefully managed under the direction of senior traditional owners.

### **2.2.3 Research, survey and monitoring**

Effective management is very much about review and continuous improvement (see Appendix 1). Internal research, survey and monitoring programs associated with the Park should have clear objectives and be integrated with operational programs.

Research is strongly encouraged where it will benefit the Park or the wider region. Research or surveys undertaken by external organisations may require permits issued under the TPWC By-laws. Park-based guidelines for permits will be negotiated by the partners.

Traditional Owners have knowledge of the Park that may contribute to research

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outcomes. It is important that they are consulted and invited to participate in research, survey and monitoring projects and, where possible, employed in this work. It is important that the outcomes of research projects are communicated to the partners and for the intellectual property rights of Traditional Owners to be protected.

#### **2.2.4 Regulated activities**

**Permits** – All commercial operations, tours, commercial film and photography, public events, public gatherings, interfere with or take wildlife, special access and aircraft activities are regulated within the Park and require a permit under the TPWC By-laws. Permits holders must abide by the conditions on each permit so that their activities do not negatively affect the values of the Park.

**Permit approval** – An effective permit processing system is needed to assess permit applications submitted to Parks and Wildlife. The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee will establish local policy and guidelines for park operations to issue permits, subject to the provisions of the TPWC Act and TPWC By-laws. The partners will need to have regard to timeliness of processing, the interests of Traditional Owners, the community, industry stakeholders and existing Parks and Wildlife policy. Such guidelines should also explicitly state when a proposed activity will, and will not, require consultation with Traditional Owners. The rights, obligations and conditions of permit holders are usually specified in the permit and will be consistent with conditions determined by the partners. Some permits may require paid supervision by Traditional Owners or Parks and Wildlife staff. The CLC will consult with Traditional Owners on permit applications that request any access or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors until any necessary agreed guidelines and procedures are developed.

**Tour operator permits** – Tour companies visiting any Northern Territory park or reserve require a permit issued under the TPWC By-laws. Most tour operator permits are addressed through the Tour Operator Permit System. If special provisions are needed a separate permit is required, with the operators rights, obligations and conditions usually detailed in the permit. Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife want information presented by tour operators to be accurate and appropriate, particularly for cultural information.

**Concerts, public events and performances** - Occasionally the Park provides a venue for public events and performances which have included choirs, orchestras, school groups and weddings. Larger events have led to significant traffic congestion along the main road, day-use areas and campgrounds. Events have been known to attract over 100 vehicles.

**Park promotion, commercial film and photography** - Media coverage and other forms of promotion can help build public support for the Park with flow-on benefits to the partners and the Territory. Accurate promotion and marketing of the Park gives visitors appropriate expectations and influences visitor satisfaction. Practical guidelines are needed to ensure that commercial film and photography can happen without compromising park values.

**Research** – External research is encouraged especially where the resulting knowledge will improve management of the Park and the Territory's park estate. Research proposals should be developed in conjunction with Parks and Wildlife staff and Traditional Owners and be consistent with Park policies and guidelines including ICIP (see section 5.1.3). Also wildlife research requires a permit to interfere with, take or keep wildlife.

**Development proposals** - All development proposals need to be reviewed against guidelines and conditions prepared by the partners. Where development proposals, leases or activities may cause environmental, heritage or cultural impacts, the proponent will be required to demonstrate that the proposal complies with all relevant legislation.

The proposal will also require the informed consent of Traditional Owners.

Advice needs to be sought from NT Departments responsible for environment, heritage, natural resource management, and the CLC. If deemed appropriate, the proponent may be required to thoroughly assess the risks to determine whether a development or activity is likely to significantly affect sacred sites, threatened species, ecological communities, natural resources or the long-term interests of the community.

The types of developments that may occur include:

- re-designing and upgrading existing facilities;
- new fences and improved vehicle access;
- commercial camping and exclusive use sites; and
- new walking tracks, bike paths or other visitor infrastructure.

**Benefit sharing agreements** - With the consideration of the Committee and consent of all affected Traditional Owners, the Park Lease and this Plan allow the partners to enter into benefit-sharing arrangements with commercial partners.

**Licence or sub-lease** – In certain circumstances, including where a secure form of land tenure is needed, a licence or sub-lease may be entered into. Any licence or sublease entered into by the Northern Territory in respect of the Park must be consistent with the terms of the Park Lease and must have the prior written consent of the Atnerrperre Aboriginal Land Trust on behalf of the Traditional Owners.

**Protecting sacred sites** – Protection for places of cultural significance to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory is afforded under overlapping legislation. The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* gives legal recognition to areas which that Act terms 'sacred sites', defined as: "a site that is sacred to Aboriginals or is otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal tradition, and includes any land that, under a law of the Northern Territory, is declared to be sacred to Aboriginals or of significance according to Aboriginal tradition". The *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act (NTASSA)* also provides protection for sites that fall within the scope of the ALRA definition of sacred site. Both the ALRA and NTASSA make it an offence to enter or remain on land that is a sacred site. It is also an offence under the NTASSA to carry out work on, use or desecrate a sacred site. Further, the NTASSA provides protection for sacred sites by requiring a person who proposes to use or conduct work on land to apply for an Authority Certificate. An Authority Certificate will only be issued if the use of or work on the land can proceed without there being a substantive risk of damage to or interference with a sacred site on or in the vicinity of the land or if an agreement is reached between the applicant and the custodians of the sacred site. Subject to the terms of the NTASSA, this protection enables custodians of the sacred site to say who can enter the site and what can happen in or on the site.

Successful joint management will assist to ensure the Park is protected in accordance with the wishes of the traditional owners. Pursuant to the ALRA, the Central Land Council has a specific function to assist Aboriginals in the taking of measures likely to assist in the protection of sacred sites within the Park.

**Protecting heritage sites** - The *Heritage Conservation Act* provides protection for two categories of places and objects. Firstly, it provides for the protection of prescribed archaeological places and objects,' which include, among other things; places containing rock paintings or carvings, prehistoric or proto-historic occupation places; places containing human remains or burial artefacts; art sites, cultural objects and wood carvings. Under the *Heritage Conservation Act* consent of the Minister is required before work is carried out on or in relation to an archaeological place or object. Further, the *Heritage Conservation Act* also provides for the protection and conservation of declared

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heritage places and objects.

Under the *Heritage Conservation Regulations* a person who discovers an archaeological place or object must report the discovery and its location to the Director as soon as practicable after discovering it. In addition to this obligation, the Traditional Owners request that if any artefacts are uncovered they are not disturbed and are immediately reported to the senior men through the Central Land Council.

**Proposals for expansion of the Park** – There are no immediate proposals to expand the Park. The vision of a “greater park” linking the West MacDonnell National Park and parks and reserves of the East MacDonnell ranges has been investigated from time to time over several decades. There are opportunities to build links between protected areas of the East MacDonnells through cooperative arrangements with nearby landholders.

**Community living areas** in the district are an integral part of both the continuation of Aboriginal cultural practices in, and the natural and cultural resource management of the country. Traditional Owners have achieved legal ownership of small parcels in proximity of the Park through the *Pastoral Land Act*.

**Mining** – The Park is relatively small and any mining or extractive activities would adversely impact the cultural values of the Park. Under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* Traditional Owners have the right to control mining on Aboriginal Land. Currently, Traditional Owners feel strongly that mining is not consistent with the values of the Park and are unlikely to approve it.

**Dealing with proposals not in the Plan** – Any proposal not addressed in the Plan will be initially considered by the partners through the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee. Any matter that may affect the interests of Traditional Owners will require the consent of affected Traditional Owners via a consultation process conducted by the CLC.

#### **Aims**

- The Aims and Directions in this Plan achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities; and
- Traditional Owners benefiting economically through joint management.
- A community supportive of joint management.

#### **Management Directions**

**2.6 Management strategies and operational programs** – Through meetings of the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee and designated working groups, the partners will prepare and implement integrated management strategies and operational programs for parks and reserves of the East MacDonnells district, including N’Dhala Gorge Nature Park and Corroboree Rock Conservation Area. Traditional Owners, Park staff, contractors and volunteers will implement operational programs as directed.

**2.7 Day-to-day management** – Parks and Wildlife will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Park.

- **Financing** – Parks and Wildlife will finance and resource the Park’s ongoing management including administrative functions, staff, infrastructure and services taking into account the funding available to the Service and the priorities determined across the NT. Opportunities to supplement the funding of Park operations and programs will be closely examined and could include revenue obtained from sub-leases, commercial agreements, permits etc. External funding may be sought for specific projects.
- **Waste Disposal** – Alternatives to landfill style waste disposal will be investigated. Recycling will be encouraged wherever possible.

**2.8 Work experience, training and employment** – The partners will commit to building capacity, employment and career development opportunities for Traditional Owners.

- **Indigenous Training and Employment Strategy** - This strategy will be prepared at an agency level to maximise Aboriginal employment and include progressive targets for specific employment of traditional landowners across the park estate. This strategy will inform local initiatives to increase the employment of Aboriginal people on the Park. Aboriginal employment will remain a standing item at Committee meetings.
- **Indigenous employment opportunities in Parks and Wildlife** – Parks and Wildlife will continue to provide opportunities for work experience, training, casual work and direct employment of Aboriginal people from the east MacDonnell district where possible. Steps will be put in place to facilitate the uptake of higher level positions including Rangers, managers, technical, administrative and professional specialist positions subject to any applicable laws or policies in force in the Territory.
- **Partnerships with community-based Indigenous Rangers and special interest groups** – Local Indigenous Community-based Rangers, community volunteers, and sponsored training and employment programs will be encouraged to assist with Park management.
- **Enterprise** – The private sector and Traditional Owners will be encouraged to take up commercial opportunities associated with the Park.
- **Contract services** – Parks and Wildlife will encourage private sector participation. Initiatives to build the capacity of Aboriginal organisations to fulfil works and service contracts will be encouraged. Preference will be given to Traditional Owners of the park participating in any commercial activities conducted under the lease subject to any law in force in the Territory. If other contractors are used, those providing training and employment to local Aboriginal people will be preferred.

**2.9 Tourism** – The partners will liaise with the tourism industry through established fora and organisations. Sustainable commercial cultural and nature-based tourism will be fostered. The partners will actively seek the assistance of Tourism NT, Tourism Central Australia and CLC for Traditional Owners to take up commercial tourism opportunities including campfire talks, cultural tours or other viable enterprises.

**2.10 Cultural advice** – Traditional Owners will be paid for specialist cultural advice and supervision consistent with the Parks and Wildlife Indigenous Fee for Service Policy.

**2.11 Research, survey and monitoring** – Programs will be approved in operational strategies and subject to annual review. Participation by Traditional Owners and employment in research, survey and monitoring projects will be maximised. Indigenous knowledge components will be incorporated in project objectives and outcomes where appropriate.

**2.12 Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)** – Traditional Owners will retain ownership of their ICIP and control the use of cultural information in keeping with standard policies developed and agreed by the CLC and Parks and Wildlife.

### **2.13 Regulated Activities**

- **Permit Policy and Guidelines** – The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee will establish local guidelines and conditions for the issue of permits, subject to the provisions of the TPWC Act and TPWC By-laws. These will consider the interests of Traditional Owners, industry needs and Parks and Wildlife policy. In the absence of guidelines, the CLC will consult with Traditional Owners over permit applications and advise Parks and Wildlife when appropriate.
- **Standard permit applications** – Delegated Parks and Wildlife staff can approve permit applications that involve activities or commercial concessions which comply with

agreed guidelines and conditions, require no special access, and are of a nature or type that has already been considered by the East MacDonnell Joint Management Committee.

- **Non-standard permit applications** – The Committee may be convened to provide direction to Park operations if a permit application involves special access or activities not addressed by agreed guidelines or conditions. A permit holder's rights, obligations and conditions will be detailed in conditions or operational agreements attached to the permit. Proposals that are culturally sensitive, large or complex, or part of a major commercial project may require the informed consent all affected Traditional Owner estate groups.
- **Routine commercial tours** – Permits for tour businesses making normal use of the Park will continue to be issued through the Tour Operator Permit System.
- **Remote Area Camping** - Remote area walkers will require a permit to camp outside a designated campground in accordance with TPWC By-laws.
- **Special events** – Proposals for special events will be encouraged if the likely impacts on other visitors and Park values are minimal.
- **Research** - Wildlife researchers require permits to interfere with, take or keep wildlife. Parks and Wildlife staff and Traditional Owners should be consulted in developing research proposals and proposals should be consistent with TPWC By-laws, Park policies and guidelines including ICIP (see Management Direction 5.2).

**2.14 Development proposals** – Any proposal will require informed consent of affected Traditional Owners, consistent with the Park Lease and appropriate assessment processes.

- **Impact assessment** - The potential impacts of all proposed activities and developments will be considered and assessed commensurate with the scale of potential impact as appropriate.
- **Commercial sub-lease** - To provide long-term security for commercial proponents the partners can provide long term sub-leases and operational arrangements and conditions for an enterprise.
- **Benefit-sharing agreements** –The partners may enter into benefit-sharing arrangements for commercial operations and developments within the Park.
- **Infrastructure sublease** – With approval of affected Traditional Owners, consistent with the Lease and appropriate assessment processes, this Plan provides the Territory Government the right to sub-lease or license portions of the Park for specific purposes, including public infrastructure.
- **Sacred sites clearances** – The Central Land Council will have sacred site clearance responsibility for all proposed work on the Park. However the joint management partners may agree from time to time that a proponent may require an Authority Certificate under the NTASSA, issued by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.
- **Heritage approvals** – Consent will be sought under the *Heritage Conservation Act* for works to prescribed Aboriginal Archaeological Places and Objects in the Park, historical sites and any significant development involving land disturbance. Sacred site clearances through the Central Land Council will also be sought for works to any archaeological sites on Park.
- **Cultural objects** - All archaeological materials are protected and must not be disturbed. A person who discovers an archaeological place or object must report the discovery to the NT Department responsible for environment and heritage. Traditional Owners also request that if any artefacts are immediately reported to the senior men

through the Central Land Council.

**2.15 Extending the Park** – Any proposals to extend the Park by including adjoining land will be considered through the East MacDonnell Joint Management Committee

**2.16 Establishing new community living areas** - Any proposal to create community living areas on the Park will be considered through the Management East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee.

**2.17 Mining and exploration** – Mining applications will be addressed through the ALRA. Soil and gravel can be extracted for soil conservation works within the Park with the approval of the partners. Fossicking will not be permitted. Nothing in the TPWC Act, limits the right of Traditional Owners to gather ochre within the Park.

**2.18 Dealing with proposals not in the Plan** – Any proposal not addressed in the Plan will be initially considered by the partners through the East MacDonnell Joint Management Committee. Any matter that may affect the interests of Traditional Owners will require the consent of affected Traditional Owners via a consultation process conducted by the CLC.

### 3. Zoning

The Park is managed for multiple purposes and different areas of the Park will be managed differently. The zoning plan is a general summary of the purpose and focus of management for all areas of the park, based on the specific values of those areas and their level of visitor access and facility development.

**Table 2.** Zoning Scheme.

	Visitor Zone	Service Zone	Conservation Zone	Special Protection Zone
Purpose	Concentrated visitor use whilst minimising negative impacts.	Management infrastructure and services.  Specific purpose leases.	Controlled visitor use to experience remote, undeveloped areas of the Park.	Protection of natural and cultural values.
Management Focus	High standard facilities and interpretation.	Management facilities and services, minimising environmental impacts.	Land conservation programs; fire, weed and feral animal management.	Protection of culturally significant sites, threatened species and biodiversity hotspots from impacts of fire, weeds and feral animals.
Visitor Access	High standard access for conventional vehicles and coaches. High standard pedestrian access. Camping in approved campsites only.	Public access for business or emergency contact only.	Camping by permit only or in connection with approved concession.	No camping. Visitor access controlled if necessary.

	Visitor Zone	Service Zone	Conservation Zone	Special Protection Zone
Visitor Activity	Orientation and interpretation, picnicking, walking, photography and nature appreciation.	Business and emergency contact. Activities stated in a permit or lease agreement.	Overnight self-reliant bush walking, research and commercial tourism (including bush camping) under permit.	Scientific research, survey and monitoring. Interpret specific values where appropriate.
Facilities	Parking areas, walking tracks, picnic facilities, shade shelters, interpretive signs, toilets and emergency facilities if needed.	Management facilities only; office, workshop, staff residences. Facilities permitted under lease or permit.	Conservation infrastructure. General provision for nature-based tourism under terms of concession permit. Other developments are not precluded subject to good planning and protection.	Facilities necessary to ensure protection of values, ie. fences, vehicle barriers, interpretation.

### Zoning Aim

- Park values protected whilst providing for public access and enjoyment.

### Management Directions

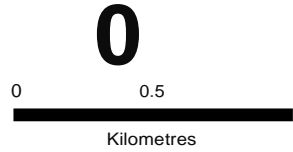
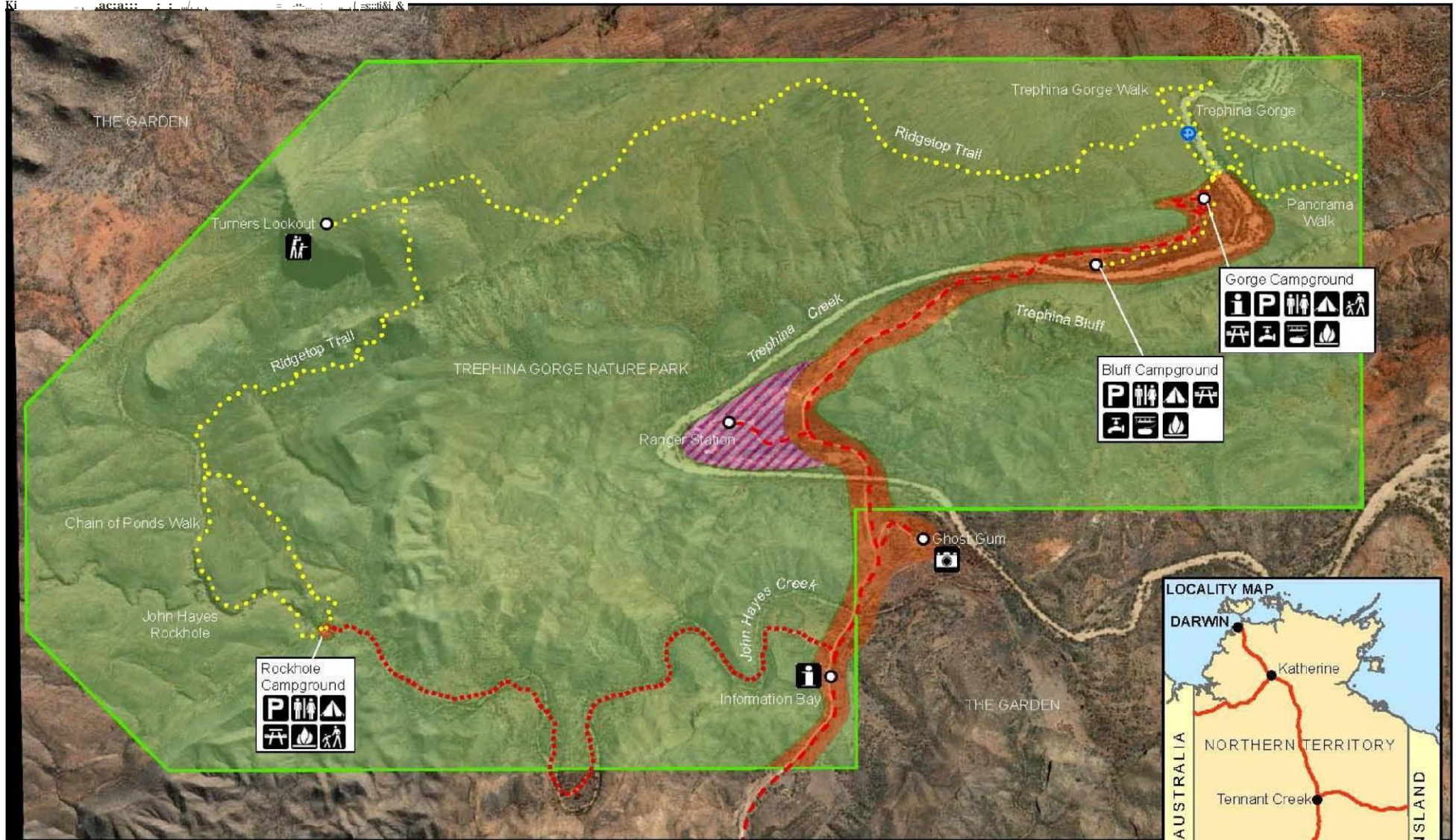
**3.1 Zoning** – Management of the Park will be in accordance with the zoning scheme (Table 2, Map 3).

**3.2 Development** - Regardless of the designated zone all management and development will maintain the park’s natural character and conservation values. Any new development will be subject to approval of the partners and appropriate environmental, sacred site and cultural heritage protection legislation.

**3.3 Special Protection Zone** – To protect sites of exceptional conservation or cultural significance from threatening processes, special protection zones can be designated by the East MacDonnell Joint Management Committee in consultation with stakeholders. The Management Committee may also extend or remove Special Protection Zones based on improved scientific understanding, directions from Traditional Owners and stakeholder advice. One special protection zone has been designated associated with a cultural site.



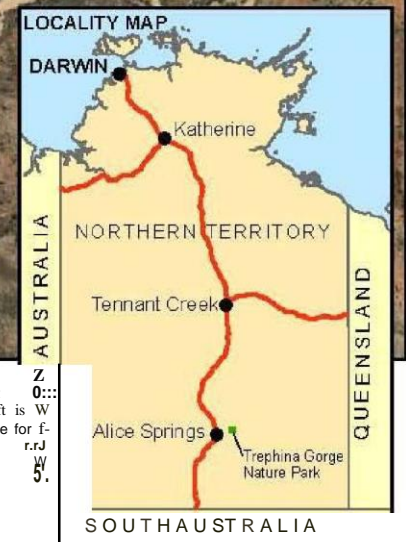
**Map 3. Zoning Map**  
**Trephina Gorge Nature Park Joint Management Plan (Draft)**



- Zoning Scheme**
- Conservation Zone
  - Visitor Zone
  - Special Protection Zone
  - Service Zone

- Locality**
- Walking track
  - Unsealed Road
  - 4WD Track
  - Trephina Gorge Nature Park

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## 4. Managing Visitors

Trephina Gorge Nature Park is one of the more popular parks in the East MacDonnells district, attracting approximately 20,000 visitors a year. The Park is noted for its sheer quartzite cliffs and River Red Gum-lined water courses.

The Park allows locals and domestic tourists to conveniently access the 'outdoors', as well as spirited travellers seeking to get off the beaten track. The Park provides a range of recreational experiences focused around the three major nodes of 'John Hayes Rock Hole', 'The Bluff' and 'Trephina Gorge'.

Increased visitor numbers to the Red Centre Way tourist route may increase visitors travelling through the district. It is important to maintain the remote character of the Park; and for the low key, nature based activities to be enhanced by authentic Indigenous experiences. Visitors to Trephina Gorge Nature Park rely on a moderate level of development. Most day-use visitors enjoy the Park for 2 to 4 hours. During the cooler months (April to Sept) campsites are in high demand. Most campers stay for 1 to 2 nights. The Ross River Resort located 20 kilometres east of the Park has more developed visitor accommodation.

The Park remains a moderate contributor to the local economy, however only a small number of tour operators currently use the Park. There is an opportunity to expand commercial niche operations in partnership with Traditional Owners.

Visitor management for Trephina Gorge Nature Park will focus on maintaining a low-key bush setting for visitors. It will be presented as an outdoor family escape, and provide opportunities for passive nature-based recreation. It will also provide a 'quiet alternative' to the Red Centre Way.

Commercial and other infrastructure will be developed consistent with processes identified in section 2. Through careful site planning, design, and management, a range of visitor experiences can occur without impact on the Park's values. Initiatives to expand commercial activities will be encouraged.

Visitor appreciation of the Park's values will be sustained through the Park's interpretation and face-to-face interpretation programs. Programs will focus on providing memorable experiences centred on the Park's natural and cultural highlights, including Aboriginal culture and Traditional Owners' connection to country for locals and travellers.

### Principles for Managing Visitor Experiences

The joint management partners of Trephina recognise:

- Positive experiences produce satisfied visitors, who may build a sense of connection and responsibility for the Park.
- Visitors' appreciation and respect for the Park is enhanced by sharing information about the Park's unique natural and cultural values.
- A broad range of visitor experiences can occur in the Park without impact on its key values, through careful planning, design and management.
- Well-designed facilities help protect Park values and promote safe, enjoyable visitor experiences.

## 4.1 Engaging with the Arrernte's living cultural landscape

Traditional Owners of the East MacDonnells maintain strong connections to country through language, culture, stories and ecological knowledge. An increasing number of visitors are looking for enriching, transformative experiences. The living cultural landscape associated with the Park has yet to be presented to this market.

Traditional Owners seek the opportunity to develop niche tourism operations and share their stories with visitors. The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee will help provide a consistent platform for the partners and the wider community to exchange ideas, develop tourism opportunities and reinforce progress.

The Park volunteer program could also be expanded to include paying holiday-makers ('voluntourism'). Cross-cultural conservation projects that enable visitors to reconnect with nature and engage with Aboriginal people could foster tremendous support and influence for joint management.

A strategic, district approach is required to develop indigenous tourism products. The local tourism industry has expressed a strong interest in a closer working relationship with Traditional Owners. The partners will actively seek the assistance from NT Government agencies associated with tourism, employment and training, as well as the CLC to support Traditional Owners who seek to develop tourism enterprises.

## 4.2 A low key 'bush' experience

Trephina Gorge Nature Park's primary visitor value is that it presents a natural, uncrowded, low-key setting which is easily accessed from Alice Springs. It is situated within the East MacDonnell district which provides a quieter alternative to the 'Red Centre Way'<sup>1</sup> and typifies the outback experience sought by 'spirited adventures'. As described by a senior Ranger: *"Trephina Gorge lies on the path less travelled, and people enjoy it for that."*

The natural low-key character of the Park is its unique visitor value. It is important that any developments or improvements re-enforce the Parks low-key 'bush' character. Any future developments should emphasise design which sensitively blends with the landscape. In general, tourism and recreation facilities offered in the Park should be maintained at a high standard.

Pressing visitor issues the partners face include:

- addressing problems associated with day-use and campground facilities;
- accommodating occasional large events/performances;
- accommodating long camping vehicles such as camper vans and motor homes;
- addressing erosion issues within the Trephina Gorge Campground and John Hayes access track; and
- adding value to the local tourism industry and attracting private investment.

It is important that the Joint Management partners work closely with local tourism

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<sup>1</sup> Trephina Gorge Nature Park lies on the eastern edge of Australia's Red Centre National Landscape, marketed nationally and internationally as "the best of the best" of Australia's natural and cultural assets. It includes internationally iconic national parks such as the West MacDonnells, Finke Gorge, Watarrka and Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Parks.

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interests to ensure key stakeholders are informed and have the opportunity to contribute to problem solving and decision-making. The partners also recognise the need to better cater to the needs of people with impaired mobility as currently few parks in the district provide for this.

Existing management facilities on the Park include the Ranger office, workshop, residences, water supply and a power generator. Waste is recycled wherever possible and visitors are encouraged to take any rubbish out of the Park.

All future developments and infrastructure should aim to be low maintenance, with practical and environmental considerations paramount. They should also be done with a view to attracting commercial operators, or providing commercial opportunities for Traditional Owners where interest exists. Private investment should also be encouraged providing it accords with Northern Territory Government and agency policy.

Tourism planning and future developments need to be underpinned by effective research and monitoring of visitor use, expectations and satisfaction.

#### **4.2.1 Community education and interpretation**

Park interpretation is a process that helps visitors see, learn, experience and be inspired firsthand. Interpretation can significantly enrich a visitor's overall experience. Interpretation planning is needed to best communicate the Park's unique values.

Within Trephina Gorge Nature Park interpretation should:

- be integrated with other parks and reserves of the East MacDonnell Ranges; and
- promote awareness of the Park's traditional ownership.

Communication between tour operators, the tourism industry and the partners is important to ensure safe and enjoyable experiences for visitors. Programs such as the Tourism NT Desert Guides should be encouraged as they provide an essential link between tour guides and the partners.

#### **4.2.2 Safety**

All visitor activity on the Park carries some risk of injury. The major safety concerns within the Park are visitors becoming lost or affected by heat, cold and/or dehydration; injured through swimming or cliff-related accidents; and injured while using Park infrastructure.

Risk reduction measures include visitor education, facility maintenance and implementing management practices that remove or reduce potential harm. Rangers are trained in emergency response and first aid, and regularly patrol the main visitor areas to monitor facilities and visitor behaviour. They maintain facilities to the highest practicable standards for visitor safety. Safety information signs are located at visitor information shelters and trail heads. A district Emergency Response Plan, which is reviewed annually provides Rangers with clear direction in an emergency. Visitor safety is also promoted through permit conditions set by the partners for tour operators and school groups.

#### **4.2.3 Access**

Within the Park a partially formed gravel road leads visitors from the southern boundary to most visitor areas. A track near the Park entrance leading to John Hayes Rockhole is accessible by high clearance vehicles only. The track follows the creek line and terminates near the Rockhole at the camping and day-use area.

There has been a noticeable increase in two-wheel self-drive tourist vehicles, trailers,



camper vans, motor homes and coaches since the previous management plan. The low standard of internal road construction and poor drainage has increased erosion in some areas. Access to the Park is restricted in times of flood, and floodwaters occasionally cause damage to existing sealed causeways.

The current roads require continuous maintenance to sustain two-wheel vehicles and the 'bush' character of the Park. The alignment of the John Hayes Rockhole track within the flood zone perpetuates flood damage. Previous management practices have caused the annual grading to lower the surface of the track, aggravating erosion and drainage problems.

Roads may be closed during flooding events and repairs. In these instances, the decision to restrict road access is the responsibility of the NT Police and Departments responsible for roads, planning and infrastructure. Closures may be necessary during wildfires and during management activities such as controlled burning and aerial control of feral animals. Road and track closures could also be required to protect values of a site, during site rehabilitation or for cultural purposes. Wherever possible, any road closures are well publicised to minimise impact on all stakeholders.

## **4.3 Nature-based recreational experiences**

### **4.3.1 Day-use**

Scenic driving is possibly the most popular activity associated with the East MacDonnells. Most visitors enjoy the Park for only a single day. Most groups spend approximately 2 to 4 hours within the Park. Many visitors stroll along Trepkina Creek and enjoy exploring the Gorge with its wide views and sandy creek-bed. Visitors with high clearance vehicles also visit John Hayes Rockhole with its steep, narrow rock walls and waterholes. The Ghost Gum site is a popular with tour groups as a photographic stop. The site lies outside the Park boundary, and is managed by Parks and Wildlife under an informal agreement with 'The Garden Station' pastoral lease.

Picnic facilities such as platform tables, shade shelters and barbecues are provided in the three visitor nodes. A larger shelter is provided at Trepkina Gorge day-use area to cater for coach tours and large groups. In some locations picnic facilities are underused due to poor site delineation. The picnic facilities in some sites may be rationalised to encourage better use depending on available resources.

### **4.3.2 Bushwalking**

Bushwalking offers visitors opportunities to appreciate the Park first hand. There are three short walks; Trepkina Gorge Walk (1 hour return), Panorama walk (1 hour return) and Chain of Ponds Walk (1.5 hours). For experienced walkers there is the longer Trepkina Ridge Top Walk (5 hours one-way) offering panoramic views of the surrounding ranges (see Map 2).

### **4.3.3 Camping**

For many visitors camping in the East MacDonnell Ranges is an integral part of the outback bush experience. There are three camping areas in the Park, located at Trepkina Gorge, the Bluff and John Hayes Rockhole (see Map 2). Poor camp site delineation increases the perception of overcrowding within the camp ground during the peak season. The current design of the Park's camp grounds poorly accommodates the growing number of long vehicles such as large trailers, large towed-campervans and motor homes. Additionally large groups and the use of generators occasionally conflict

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with the low-key 'bush style' experience sought by other Park users.

Several natural drainage channels run through the Trephina Gorge camp site, limiting use of the site. The natural drainage has been disturbed and is now actively eroding. Servicing the number and distribution of the BBQs, fire-pits and watering points is also resource-intensive.

If visitor numbers grow, new accommodation options may need to be considered, either within the Park or within the East MacDonnell district. There is scope for the partners to explore options to improve the campgrounds and traffic flow by centralising amenities and increasing the number of campsites. Visitors seeking higher standards of accommodation should be directed to other local providers, such as Ross River Resort.

#### 4.3.4 Other recreational activities

**Swimming** - The waterholes at Trephina Gorge and John Hayes Rockhole are popular for swimming during the warmer months. However during prolonged dry periods the waterholes can evaporate leaving only a sandy creek-bed. Sometimes swimming may be discouraged in the interests of public health.

**Climbing and abseiling and mountain-biking** - The Park has the potential to support rock climbing and abseiling and mountain-biking. Unapproved climbing and abseiling routes are known within the Park. Mountain bike riding is an emerging interest within the district; however as yet no mountain bike trails have been developed. Consultation and sacred site assessment is required for all climbing and abseiling routes and mountain-bike trails. Collaboration with local user groups is needed to overcome potential environmental, cultural or safety issues. To ensure these activities are sustainable the partners should develop policy and guidelines in consultation with stakeholders.

#### Aims

- Traditional Owners participating in the local tourism industry.
- The Park's 'bush character' within the East MacDonnells district retained.
- Visitors enjoy themselves; are safe and highly satisfied.

#### Management Directions

**4.1 Park presentation** - The partners will actively seek the assistance of Tourism NT, Tourism Central Australia and other agencies to ensure the Park is promoted consistent with the values of the Park. The Park's natural low-key character and aesthetics will be protected by designing and locating developments to be sympathetic to the surrounding landscape.

**4.2 Indigenous tourism** – At a district level, the partners will work with the tourism industry, Central Land Council and local operators to foster Aboriginal employment in tourism and assist development of local Indigenous tourism enterprise.

**4.3 Visitor interpretation and community education** – The Partners will develop an interpretation strategy and annual operational program for the East MacDonnell District. They will invest in moderate levels of interpretation in the Park and deliver community education and Junior Ranger programs where possible.

- **Visitor Information** - Aboriginal people, place names and language will be represented where appropriate, in conjunction with biological and geological information.
- **Tour operator and tour guide support** – Material will be provided to tour operators, so they can provide accurate and appropriate information about the Park's values. Opportunities to Traditional Owners to train operators will also be explored.

**4.4 Visitor monitoring** – Visitor monitoring will be undertaken on an as needs basis for specific planning requirements.

**4.5 Visitor access** - The partners will seek to maintain the primary road as two-wheel drive access. All vehicle traffic will be restricted to formed roads.

- **Road Closures** - The Park or areas within it may be temporarily closed to the public for flood, fire, feral animal control, rehabilitation works and important ceremonies. These infrequent events will be appropriately publicised.
- **Repairs** - The partners will engage with the relevant roads management and soil conservation advisory branches within the Northern Territory Government, to determine the most appropriate techniques to upgrade and maintain the Park's road access system, reduce erosion and minimise the impact of flooding on visitor access.
- **Road maintenance** - The partners will actively seek the assistance from the relevant road management and soil conservation advisory branches within the Northern Territory Government, to determine the most appropriate techniques to upgrade and maintain road access, reduce erosion and minimise the impact of flooding on visitor access.
- **Mobility impaired** – While keeping with the natural low-key character of the Park, opportunities to provide wheelchair standard access to major features in the Visitor Zone, such as Trepkina Gorge and the Bluff, will be investigated.
- **John Hayes Rockhole** - Access to John Hayes Rock Hole will remain as an unsealed high clearance track with repair and maintenance directed towards erosion control, rehabilitation of degraded areas and provision of proper drainage.
- **Ghost Gum** - Negotiations will proceed with 'The Garden Station' lessee to formalise management of the Ghost Gum site.
- **Pets** - Entry of pets will be consistent with existing Parks and Wildlife policy.

**4.6 Facilities** – Park infrastructure will be maintained to a high standard, and subject to resources facilities will be sustained to a level of service consistent with the Park's visitor demand.

**4.7 Future developments** – Retaining the Park's natural low-key character will be a priority. The East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee will annually endorse rolling five-year works plans and site development plans with stakeholders, guided by the Territory Parks Tourism Plan, industry experts and visitor surveys. Decisions will be made in accordance with structures and processes outlined in section 2.

**4.8 Partnerships and commercial activities** - Private industry partnerships to provide infrastructure and visitor services will be encouraged. Management and maintenance of campground and picnic areas may be outsourced. Appropriate public events and performances will be encouraged.

**4.9 Visitor safety** – The Emergency Response Plan will be reviewed annually. Identified risks will be rectified on a priority basis and rangers will receive appropriate training. The Park's facilities and visitor management practices will be subject to ongoing monitoring, maintenance and risk assessment. Tour operators will be encouraged to report incidents and safety issues (physical and behavioural) to park management.

**4.10 Bushwalking** - A range of walking experiences will be offered in the Park. In highly visited areas walking tracks may be hardened to improve access and reduce erosion. As a general guide the following track standards (AS 2156.1-2001) will apply to Park's zoning:

- **Visitor Zone:** Class 1, Class 2, Class 3.
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- **Conservation Zone:** Class 4, Class 5, Class 6.

All constructed walking tracks within the Park will be annually assessed to:

- determine track condition and required maintenance;
- determine adequacy and condition of directional and interpretive signage.
- **Off-track exploration of the Park** - will be encouraged. Off-track day walks do not require a permit however overnight 'off-track' walks not using a designated campground will require a camping permit (see 2.2.4).
- **Track development** - All new track development work will require appropriate site clearances and advice prior to implementation (see 2.2.4).
- **Long distance walking track** - The feasibility of establishing a walking track linking the Park with N'Dhala Gorge Nature Park and Ross River Homestead will be assessed. Consultation with Traditional Owners and neighbouring landholders will be undertaken if a long distance walking track is considered feasible.

**4.11 Camping** - Trephina Gorge, Trephina Bluff and John Hayes Rockhole camping areas will be maintained to provide a natural low-key bush setting.

- **Campground services** - The partners will consider options to better meet visitor needs, ameliorate erosion and take into account capacity to service the facilities.
- **Long camping vehicles** - The partners will consider converting unused day-use areas to accommodate a limited number of large camping vehicles such as camping trailers, towed-campervans and motor homes.
- **Compliance** - If needed restrictions may be placed on the maximum duration of stay for campers and a pre-visit booking system may be introduced. Camping outside designated campgrounds will require a permit issued in accordance with *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws* (see 2.2.4). Private generators will not be permitted in the campground.

**4.12 Campfires** - Open fires are permitted in designated fire-pits only. To minimise the environmental impacts, firewood collection will be designated on a site by site basis. The partners may investigate options to have wood supplied under contract for purchase by campers. Fire restrictions will be enforced on campfires.

#### **4.13 Other Activities**

- **Swimming** – Swimming will be promoted unless prohibited by signs and other information on site. Provision of safety information and equipment may be considered where appropriate. Sometimes swimming may be discouraged in the interests of public health.
- **Rock climbing and abseiling** – Climbing and abseiling sites will be investigated by the Committee with stakeholders. If needed the Joint Management Committee will establish local policy and guidelines. All rock climbing and abseiling sites will require sacred site clearances and be subject to environmental and safety monitoring.
- **Mountain-biking** – Mountain bike trails may be considered by the Committee in collaboration with stakeholders. Bikes are not permitted on walking tracks within the Park unless specifically designated. Bikes are not permitted off-track within the Park.
- **Concerts, public events and performances** – The partners will consider options to better address temporary traffic congestion associated with large public events and performances.

## 5. Managing Country

Trephina Gorge Nature Park is a small park (1,771 ha), which contributes to the Arrernte's living cultural landscape and is situated within the internationally significant MacDonnell Bioregion. While the Park itself contains registered sacred sites and biodiversity values of national significance, its contribution to conservation in the context of the National Reserve System is relatively low.

Joint management brings a new way of looking at managing country. Under customary law, Aboriginal people and land are seen as one, and country is defined by sites and dreamings not as clearly bound entities. Traditional Owners of Trephina Gorge have an obligation to protect and maintain their ancestral homelands within the Park and beyond its boundary.

Laws laid down in the Altyerre or dreaming require Traditional Owners to respect the land and their ancestors by performing ceremonies on country and passing religious and ecological knowledge onto their descendants. Caring also entails visiting and watching the country, moving appropriately on it, and passing knowledge onto family.

Park Rangers share with Traditional Owners a deep respect for the land and seek to look after it for future generations. Caring for country in a joint management context requires cross-cultural awareness and shared information, to ensure that country is looked after properly in a way that involves both partners using a combination of western science and Indigenous ecological knowledge.

Management decision-making needs to be supported by knowledge. It is essential to develop a better understanding of ecosystem dynamics and the key threats and their impacts through survey, research and monitoring.

Management programs also need to look beyond the Park boundary to be effective.

### Principles for Managing Country

- Managing country means working together on country and managing natural and cultural values together.
- Management should protect and enhance Park values.
- Management of Indigenous cultural knowledge and sites is the responsibility of Traditional Owners.
- Adverse impacts of wildfire, weeds, feral animals and erosion should be minimised.

### 5.1 Cultural Heritage Values

#### 5.1.1 A living cultural landscape

Pwenye is the Eastern Arrernte name Traditional Owners of Trephina Gorge Nature Park use to refer to themselves as being part of their country. For Pwenye there are many sites of strong cultural significance throughout the East MacDonnell Ranges. Trephina Gorge Nature Park is part of this extensive living cultural landscape in which knowledge is transmitted through the dreaming stories of totemic ancestors, or the Altyerre. Pwenye remain connected to these ancestors who still reside in totemic sites across the Park.

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To the Traditional Owners of Trephina Gorge Nature Park their country is sacred in Aboriginal religion and law. Dreaming stories and traditions are connected to places such as Alherrkentye (Trephina Gorge) and Atneperrke (John Hayes Rockhole) and these places remain important to Pwenye.

### 5.1.2 Aboriginal use

For Traditional Owners looking after the country involves visiting and watching the country, moving appropriately on it, and protecting it from damage, as well as transmitting the knowledge about the land and places on it, including the use of its resources, in culturally appropriate ways. The continuation of Aboriginal cultural practices in the Park is of great importance to the Traditional Owners. It is likely that joint management will foster resurgence in traditional land use practises.

Most Eastern Arrernte people will only undertake traditional cultural activities where they have a traditional right to do so as owners of that land. Hunting, for instance, requires permission from appropriate Traditional Owners, if undertaken on someone else's country.

Visiting country, camping, hunting, gathering bush tucker in season, and teaching their children are all seen as important aspects of maintaining their traditional cultural practices. Travelling long distances in order to visit the Park to carry out cultural practices is difficult for some Traditional Owners.

**Bushfoods** - Traditional Owners have a great knowledge of bush foods including where and when to find them, and how to use them. Under the TPWC Act, Traditional Owners have the right to hunt wildlife and gather bush foods and medicines. To supplement store-bought supplies and to fulfil customary obligations, Traditional Owners hunt a range of game such as Aherre (Kangaroos) and Atyunpe (Perentie). They also gather seasonal bush foods such as awele-awele / alperrantyeye (bush-tomato), arrankweye (bush-plum) and atwakeye (bush-orange). Eastern Arrernte women hunt and gather bushtucker like Tyape (witchetty grubs), Ntange (edible seeds) and merne utyerrke (fruit from bush-fig *Ficus platypoda*). Bush medicines are also collected and relevant knowledge is passed on to younger people.

**Teaching** - Traditional Owners take their children, nieces, nephews and grandchildren 'out bush' to teach them bush skills and knowledge about the plants and animals, where to go and how to behave on the country of their ancestors and about the stories connected to Altyerre.

**Ceremony** - Restricted ceremonies connected to this area ensure the passing of important knowledge to the next generation. It is likely that joint management for these Parks will see a resurgence in traditional land use practises for these areas.

### 5.1.3 Aboriginal knowledge

Trephina Gorge Nature Park's Traditional Owners have substantial knowledge of the Park's natural and cultural values and their inclusion and perspectives will bring changes to the way the Park is managed. The Traditional Owners provide an essential link to the integrity of the East MacDonnells cultural landscape. Senior Traditional Owners hold accumulated knowledge spanning thousands of years. They are custodians for knowledge that will continue to inform and inspire future generations.

ICIP is indigenous peoples' rights to their heritage. It includes all knowledge, objects and sites, the nature or use of which has been transmitted from generation to generation. The joint management partners acknowledge that cultural knowledge belongs to the Traditional Owners and will not use, or permit to be used, such knowledge without the prior consent of the Traditional Owners. Wherever possible, the partners will assist the

Traditional Owners assert their intellectual property rights.

While Traditional Owners are protective of their knowledge they are keen to share some knowledge with visitors through interpretive programs, particularly about bush tucker and personal histories. The recording, storage and use of cultural information will be consistent with the directions of Traditional Owners through the East MacDonnell Joint Management Committee and with policy established between CLC and Parks and Wildlife.

The need to transfer knowledge and practices from old to young people is one of the most important issues identified by Traditional Owners. They also want to incorporate Indigenous ecological knowledge, skills and experiences into operations for the Park, and ensure it is applied appropriately and in the right context.

There is great scope for Traditional Owners to interpret the significance of the Park to staff, commercial operators and visitors. Together the partners can promote an understanding and respect for the traditions, languages, cultures, customs and skills of Traditional Owners.

#### **5.1.4 Sacred sites**

The East MacDonnell Ranges abound with sacred sites and culturally significant areas. Sacred sites are integral to Traditional Owners' identity and continuing connection with the land. They are integral to their spirituality, cultural knowledge and maintenance of the country. While the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority identifies one registered and one recorded sacred site within the Park, many other significant sites remain unrecorded. In the course of joint management Traditional Owners may wish to regulate visitor access to some culturally important areas. To avoid damage to sacred sites, all works or developments in Trepina Gorge Nature Park require sacred site clearances and consultation with the relevant Traditional Owners arranged through the Central Land Council.

The Park contains small art sites which provide an opportunity for visitors to better understand Arrernte ties to country. How these sites are managed requires careful consideration and consultation with Traditional Owners.

**Archaeological Places and Objects** (including Art Sites and Artefacts) - It is important to Traditional Owners that rock art and archaeological materials in the Park are also protected. The *Heritage Conservation Act* gives specific protection to prescribed Aboriginal Archaeological Places and Objects in the Northern Territory. Heritage clearances must be sought under this Act for any works, including conservation, to prescribed archaeological sites in the Park.

Art sites provide an excellent opportunity to explain the cultural ties to the country. However in some areas visitors can cause impacts, such as by touching rock art. There is a need to ensure visitors are educated and understand the implications of interfering with these sites. Natural events such as flood and fire can also cause significant impacts. How these impacts are managed requires careful consideration and consultation with Traditional Owners.

#### **5.1.5 Historic values**

Many events of historical interest have occurred within the East MacDonnell's district, associated with early European expeditions in the area; contact between Aboriginal people and colonialists, the Arltunga goldfields and pastoralism.

European history of the Park began with the exploration of the area by an advance survey party for the Overland Telegraph Line led by John Ross in 1870. Pastoralism became the main land use of the Park until the mid 1950's, followed by a brief period of

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logging when River Red Gums were cut for railway sleepers for the Ghan line. Tourism on a significant scale coincided with the opening of the Ross River Homestead Tourist Park (now Ross River Resort) in 1959.

There are currently no known historic sites within the Park. Should the partners become aware of any potential sites they are required to consult with NT Heritage Officers to determine its significance. Sites should be properly documented and conserved until their significance is clarified. Any proposed works at such sites requires cultural heritage clearance.

#### **Aims**

- Traditional Owners satisfied with their involvement, fulfilment of their cultural responsibilities and protection of cultural sites.
- Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) incorporated into Park operations and managed to the satisfaction of Traditional Owners.

#### **Management Directions**

**5.1 Aboriginal cultural business** – Parks and Wildlife will respect advice relating to cultural matters and customary obligations from Traditional Owners. Restricted access for ceremonial purposes is unlikely to affect the main visitor areas. Ample notice will be given to the public regarding temporary closures.

**5.2 District cultural heritage management strategy (5 yr) and annual operational program (1 yr)** - A cultural heritage management strategy and annual operational program for the East MacDonnell district will be developed with Traditional Owners. The program will be endorsed by the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee with consideration of advice provided by specialist groups. The partners and Central Land Council will work together to identify supporting resources if required.

- **“Back to Country”** – With support from the Central Land Council the partners will spend time on country together, facilitating transmission of cultural knowledge and skills between Traditional Owner families, to the younger generation and to the rangers, as appropriate.
- **Indigenous ecological knowledge** – Indigenous ecological knowledge and priorities will be incorporated into natural resource management through the active involvement of Traditional Owners in planning and implementation activities.
- **Indigenous cultural and intellectual property (ICIP)** – Cultural knowledge will not be used, or permitted to be used without the prior consent of the Traditional Owners. Wherever possible, the partners will assist the Traditional Owners assert their intellectual property rights, consistent with standard policies developed and agreed by the CLC and Parks and Wildlife.
- **Traditional hunting and gathering** – Rights in relation to hunting and gathering from the Park for traditional purposes will extend to Traditional Owners and Aboriginals who have traditionally used the area in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. To ensure public safety and the protection of Park’s values local hunting and gathering guidelines will be established by the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee and approved by all Traditional Owners.

**5.3 Culturally sensitive areas** – Park operations will uphold restrictions and guidelines for sacred sites or culturally sensitive areas of the Park as directed by senior men or the Central Land Council as their representative and subject to any relevant laws in force in the Northern Territory.

**5.4 Sacred site clearances** – see Management Direction 2.14.

**5.5 Cultural heritage approval** – see Management Direction 2.14.

**5.6 Cultural objects** - see Management Direction 2.14.

**5.7 Archaeological and historic sites** - will be properly documented and assessed for their significance and heritage value, incorporating significance to relevant Traditional Owners where appropriate. The Burra Charter principles and process will guide this assessment.

- Research including recording oral histories and Indigenous knowledge** - will be encouraged consistent with ICIP Policy.
- Sites of significance** - may be submitted for nomination to the NT Heritage Register under the *Heritage Conservation Act*. Sites may be interpreted for the public, with the permission of the partners.
- **Archaeological and historic sites** - will be maintained until they can be properly assessed for their significance and heritage value. Sites containing rock art and wooden artefacts will be protected through operational strategies and implemented through annual operational fire management programs.

## 5.2 Natural Heritage Values

### 5.2.1 Natural character

The natural character of Trepkina Gorge Nature Park underpins the low-key bush and recreational experiences valued by visitors. The Park is noted for its sheer quartzite cliffs and River Red Gum-lined watercourses. Two gorges within the Park dissect the East MacDonnell Ranges; Trepkina Gorge, with wide views and sandy creek-bed and John Hayes Rock Hole with steep, narrow rock walls.

**Soils** - The Park's soils are moderately to highly susceptible to erosion. Some areas of the Park have been degraded through rill, gully, stream bank erosion, scalding and loss of ground cover. Areas of existing erosion should be addressed to reduce remediation cost over the long term.

**Catchment, Watercourses and Waterholes** - Watercourses and waterholes provide critical ecosystem functions which underpin natural, cultural and recreational values well beyond the boundaries of the Park. Waterholes in the park are invaluable to Traditional Owners and continue to retain cultural significance. Today Trepkina Gorge itself and John Hayes Rockhole are the main tourist destinations within the Park. Visitor activities that concentrate at these sites include swimming, bush walking, nature study and scenic appreciation. Despite irregular flows the Park's waterholes provide habitat for Spangled Perch (*Leiopotherapon unicolor*) which may aestivate in damp soil or debris at the bottom of the waterholes in order to survive periods of unfavourable conditions.

The upper catchment areas of Trepkina and John Hayes Creeks extend beyond the Park boundary and any influence on the upper catchment will require collaboration with neighbouring landholders. Much of the Park's infrastructure is situated on the active floodplain of Trepkina Creek and may be at risk during larger floods.

### 5.2.2 Biodiversity

Trepkina Gorge Nature Park is situated within the internationally significant MacDonnell Bioregion. It contains some values of national conservation significance; however its overall comparative contribution to conservation and the National Reserve System is limited. Approximately 33 land units have been identified and mapped across the Park. The broad vegetation types of the Park include:

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- Tall Open Shrublands *Acacia kempeana* (Witchetty Bush) Acacia tall open-shrubland with cassia, *Eremophila* (Fuchsia) open-shrubland understorey.
- Mixed Species Low Open Woodland consisting of *Triodia clelandii* (Weeping Spinifex) hummock grassland with mixed species low open-woodland overstorey.
- Hummock Grasslands and Tall Shrublands consisting of *Triodia longiceps* (Grey Spinifex) hummock grassland with Acacia tall open-shrubland overstorey.

Of the 256 native plants recorded in the Park, it directly contributes to the conservation of two plant species *Minuria tridens* and *Ricinocarpus gloria-medii* recognised as vulnerable both in the Territory (TPWC Act) and nationally (EPBC Act). There are recovery plans for both species (*M. tridens* (Nano and Pavey 2008) and *R. gloria-medii* (Nano *et al.* 2007). *Ricinocarpus gloria-medii* is endemic to the MacDonnell Ranges bioregion, where it is only known from four discrete populations (Nano *et al.* 2007).

Fire-sensitive plant communities occur on the southern slopes of Trephina Bluff and the Main Range and include *Eucalyptus thozetiana*.

A very large and attractive Ghost Gum situated off the Park entrance road is of interest to visitors. An informal agreement between the Partners and 'The Garden Station' recognises maintenance of the site for park visitors.

The Park contains five native mammal species, 14 reptile species, 80 bird species and one fish species. The Park contributes to the conservation of Bednall's Land Snail (*Sinumelon bednalli*), listed as Endangered nationally (EPBC Act) and recognised as Critically Endangered in the Northern Territory (TPWC Act). The Black-footed Rock Wallaby (*Petrogale lateralis*) is Vulnerable nationally (EPBC Act). Two other Territory-listed species, the Australian Bustard (*Ardeotis australis*) and the Emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) have been recorded in the Park, but the Park does not provide substantial habitat for these species.

### 5.2.3 Managing threatening processes

**Fire management** - Fire has long been a part of the environment and has played a major part in shaping the district's vegetation. However rapidly changed fire regimes and increased intensity of wildfires, fuelled by Buffel and Couch Grass are damaging the fire-sensitive plant communities and ecosystems of the broader district.

Long-term fire management goals in the Park are avoiding large catastrophic wildfires and protecting fire-sensitive communities. Fire planning requires an emphasis on burning large strategic breaks at every appropriate opportunity, patch burning and prescribed burns in fire-tolerant vegetation such as Spinifex-dominated communities. Good fire management should result in a greater diversity of vegetation types at different stages of recovery from fire.

It is important for Traditional Owners to be actively engaged in integrating Indigenous ecological knowledge and priorities into fire planning and implementation. District fire planning and liaison with adjoining landowners remains a critical part of effective fire management.

**Weed and introduced plant management** - Eleven introduced plant species have been recorded within Trephina Gorge Nature Park. Buffel Grass and Couch Grass are the highest priority weeds for control as they increase the threat of frequent, intense fires. Buffel Grass extends well into the range country, whilst Couch Grass is largely confined to waterways and springs. Mossman River Grass (*Cenchrus echinatus*) and Noogoora Burr (*Xanthium occidentale*) are recorded within the Park and declared Category B under the *Weeds Management Act 2001* requiring growth and spread to be controlled.

**Feral animal management** - Large introduced herbivores, particularly stock, are the



greatest threat to the Park's natural and cultural values. Other introduced animals occurring in the Park including cats, foxes, rabbits, and European honey bees. The extent and numbers of these animals varies with environmental conditions. Stock has been excluded from the Park since perimeter fencing was completed in 1979.

Large introduced herbivores need to be controlled to reduce impacts on native vegetation and visitor values. Perimeter fencing remains as the most effective way to exclude stock from the Park. The partners will need to liaise with adjoining landowners to negotiate effective and acceptable methods to exclude stock from the Park.

### **Aims**

- No significant wildfires.
- No large introduced herbivores.

### **Management Directions**

**5.8 District operational strategies (5 yr) and annual operational programs (1 yr) - All** fire, weed, feral animal and erosion management will be directed through regional operational strategies prepared by the partners approximately every 5 years. The strategies will specify targets, nominal management regimes and a framework for adaptive management. Annual operational programs implement the strategies and need only be brief documents specifying the inputs and outputs needed to meet defined strategic targets. Annual operational programs will take due consideration of available resources and priorities at a district and Territory level. Operational management strategies will:

- take an integrated approach between parks and reserves of the East MacDonnell district.
- focus on key values and set clear 5-10 year targets to attain long-term aims (10-20 years) of this Plan and other Park Plans of the district; and
- be prepared with Traditional Owners and endorsed by the East MacDonnells Joint Management Committee with advice provided by specialist groups, such as the Fire Task Group.

The operational management priority for Trepina Gorge Nature Park is to protect the natural character of the Park's landscape.

**5.9 Catchment management – Water quality** in the major visitor nodes and waterholes will be monitored as required for pathogens. Swimming may be prohibited in waterholes considered a risk to visitor health and safety.

- **Fishing** - will be prohibited in the Park. Traditional rights to use the Park's resources will be respected. Use will be consistent with Aboriginal hunting and gathering policy as determined by the partners and the TPWC Act.

**5.10 Biodiversity conservation** – will be addressed through district operational strategies and implemented through annual operational programs. Traditional Owners will be involved in biodiversity conservation activities where possible.

- **Research** - will be encouraged. Any improved understanding of species, habitats, Aboriginal use and natural processes will be incorporated into Park management programs. Species distribution and status information will be recorded and entered into relevant, centrally-held databases.
- **Conservation management links** - will be encouraged between Park and off-Park lands at a district scale through collaboration with nearby landholders, including Loves Creek and the Gardens pastoral stations to gain better conservation and employment outcomes.

**5.11 Fire management** – will aim to (1) Protect life and property, and (2) reducing the risk of large wildfires.

- **Prescribed burning** - Fuel reduction burns in fire-tolerant communities will occur during cooler months, or after rain. Nominal targets will include burning greater than 5% of fire-tolerant communities each year, while ensuring no more than 10% of fire-sensitive vegetation is burnt within a 10 year period.
- **Fire Monitoring** - Fire history and ecological responses to fire will be recorded and entered into relevant, centrally-held databases.

**5.12 Weed management** – (1) Buffel and Couch grasses will be controlled to create breaks in otherwise continuous wildlife-carrying fuel, and (2) control the growth and spread of Category B weeds. Good weed management will result in discontinuous stands of Buffel Grass and/or Couch Grass in strategic locations to reduce fuel capacity for wildfires and to protect fire-sensitive vegetation.

- **Minimising spread** - where possible soil and gravel for vehicle tracks, trails and maintenance will use locally sourced materials.
- **Weed Monitoring** - The risk posed by new weed species outbreaks will be assessed as soon as possible following detection

**5.13 Feral animal management** – will aim to exclude large introduced herbivores from the Park. Boundary fencing will be maintained and large introduced herbivores removed as soon as possible.

**5.14 Soil conservation** – will aim to (1) minimise disturbance to Park soils, and (2) rehabilitate areas which degrade visitor experiences.

- **Soil rehabilitation** - Degraded sites in the visitor area will be identified, prioritised and progressively rehabilitated using expert advice.
- **Extraction** - soil and gravel may be extracted for local soil conservation works within the Park with the approval of the partners. No other soil or gravel will be removed or disturbed except subject to conditions of a Sacred Site Clearance, Heritage approval and a permit issued under the TPWC By-laws as necessary.

## References

- Nano, C. and Pavey, C. (2008) *National Recovery Plan for Olearia macdonnellensis, Minuria tridens (Minnie Daisy) and Actinotus schwarzii (Desert Flannel Flower)*. Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport, Northern Territory.
- Nano, C., Harris, M., and Pavey, C. (2007) *National recovery plan for threatened Acacias and Ricinocarpos gloria-medii in central Australia*. Northern Territory Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts, Northern Territory.

## Appendix 1. Selected Performance Indicators

These performance indicators are an additional tool to assist the joint management partners to measure the success of management. They are not the only measures of success and other measures may be developed over time. There is a reasonable expectation that they will be achieved, if not year by year, then over the longer term of this plan. When indicators are not achieved, the reasons need to be established and steps taken to improve outcomes.

Aims	Performance Indicators	Targets	Means
Managing Visitors			
Visitors enjoy themselves; be safe and highly satisfied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visitor satisfaction</li> <li>- Number of safety related incidents</li> </ul>	<p>High</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>Visitor surveys for specific planning requirements.</p> <p>Ongoing reporting.</p>
Traditional Owners participating in the tourism industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traditional Owner satisfaction</li> </ul>	High	Partner satisfaction monitoring (see Mgt. Dir. 2.4).
Managing Country			
Traditional Owners satisfied with the protection of cultural sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traditional Owner satisfaction.</li> </ul>	High	Partner satisfaction monitoring.
Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) incorporated into Park operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Indigenous Ecological Knowledge, mutual understanding and park operation capability</li> </ul>	Increased	Partner satisfaction monitoring.
No significant wildfires.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Area burnt in fire-tolerant vegetation communities</li> <li>- Area burnt in fire-sensitive vegetation</li> </ul>	<p>&gt; 5% annually</p> <p>&lt; 10% over 10 years in total</p>	Fire mapping, ongoing data management and review.
No large introduced herbivores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presence of large introduced herbivores</li> <li>- The Park boundary is maintained</li> </ul>	<p>Nil</p> <p>stock proof</p>	Opportunistic sightings.
Park Governance			
Equitable partnership with effective governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Joint Management Partners Satisfied with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication and Engagement</li> <li>- Representation and Decision-making processes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	High	<p>Partner satisfaction monitoring.</p> <p>Ongoing record-keeping, reporting and review.</p>

Aims	Performance Indicators	Targets	Means
	- Building capacity		
The Aims and Directions in this Plan are achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Achievement of Aims and Management Directions in this plan</li> <li>- Implementation of strategies and annual operational programs</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes realised</p> <p>% of priority actions completed</p>	<p>Partner satisfaction monitoring.</p> <p>Ongoing record-keeping, reporting and review.</p>
Traditional Owners benefiting economically through joint management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New skills acquired by Traditional Owners</li> <li>- Number of days employment in relation to the Park</li> <li>- Number of contract opportunities created and taken up</li> </ul>	<p>Increased</p> <p>Increased</p> <p>Increased</p>	<p>Partner satisfaction monitoring.</p> <p>Ongoing record-keeping, reporting and review.</p>



# Finke Gorge National Park

**Joint Management Plan**    October 2011





Finke Gorge National Park Joint Management Plan

Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory, Department of Natural Resources,  
Environment, The Arts and Sport

PO Box 1120,

ALICE SPRINGS, NT, 0871.

The document is available at: [www.nt.gov.au/consult](http://www.nt.gov.au/consult)

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Cover Image: Visitors at Palm Valley (Source: Tourism NT)

This Page: Palm Valley Palms, Finke Gorge National Park



## Executive Summary

Finke Gorge National Park is located 138 kilometres west of Alice Springs within Australia's Red Centre National Landscape. The Park attracts over 28,400 visitors each year and offers some of the finest remote four wheel drive and bush camping experiences in Central Australia. The Park is jointly managed between Traditional Owners and the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service.



Source: Tourism NT

Finke Gorge National Park's key values include an outstanding representation of Central Australian flora, a continued cultural connection to an ancient landscape and a tranquil destination for four wheel drive enthusiasts. The Park features scenic palms, springs and rocky outcrops at Palm Valley and the permanent waters and historic Police Camp ruins at Boggy Hole.

The main objectives of management are to: protect the Park's cultural sites, springs, seepages and associated ecosystems; provide for safe four wheel drive and bush camping experiences; and to share the area's rich cultural heritage with visitors.

Key issues within the Park include protecting palm seedlings from trampling, wildfires and climate change and ensuring that motorists are well prepared for the challenging four wheel conditions.

The Park will receive a high level of management input from park operations with great scope for the joint management partners to increase Indigenous employment associated with the Park. In collaboration with adjoining landowners, opportunities exist to expand biodiversity conservation, four wheel drive routes and explore accommodation alternatives.



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# Vision for the Park

## “Urrkapintja nyinta - Working together as one.”

The joint management partners of Finke Gorge National Park will talk and work together as one, in a strong, equal relationship to ensure:

- Country is looked after properly for future generations;
- Traditional Owners and Custodians are actively involved through jobs, training and business opportunities; and
- Visitors have a unique experience.

## 1. Introduction

At Finke Gorge National Park the ancient and majestic Finke River has deeply incised the Central Australian Ranges, giving rise to remarkable sandstone formations, varied ecosystems and a safe haven for relict species including the threatened Red Cabbage Palm, *Livistona mariae*. The Park is part of the traditional homelands of the *Arrernte* Aboriginal people, housing a number of important sacred sites and Dreamings that underpin local culture.

Located 138 km west of Alice Springs and 19 km south of Hermannsburg, this 42,253 ha Park is centrally located within Australia’s Red Centre National Landscape. Finke Gorge National Park protects one of Australia’s most stunning natural and cultural environments, contributing significantly to botanical conservation. The Park has become the most popular four wheel drive experience in Central Australia and a potential source of local Indigenous employment.

Finke Gorge National Park (Northern Territory Portion (“NTP”) 6623) is bounded by Henbury Station<sup>i</sup> (Perpetual Pastoral Lease 1094), NTP 657 to the south and Aboriginal freehold land to the north (Ntaria Aboriginal Land Trust NTP 2079, Roulpmaulpma Aboriginal Land Trust NTP 2077 and Uruna Aboriginal Land Trust NTP 2078).

NT Portions 929 and 996 were proclaimed “Palm Valley Flora and Fauna Conservation Reserve” in October 1966 under section 103 of the *Crown Lands Ordinance*, from lands surrendered by Henbury Station and the Finke River Mission. They came under the control and conservation management of the Northern Territory Reserves Board in February 1967. Oil Lease No 3 was granted over the northern portion of the Park taking up most of NTP 929, being Palm Valley and the north-east corner of NTP 996. This area became NTP 5787 and was not declared in the 1978 declaration of the remainder of Finke Gorge National Park.

NTP 5787 became subject to an Aboriginal Land Claim. The Palm Valley Land Claim was heard and the Aboriginal Land Commissioner recommended it be granted to a land trust for the benefit of Aboriginal people entitled by Aboriginal tradition to the use or occupation of the land. The Commissioner’s 1999 report observes that during the hearings both the traditional

<sup>i</sup> In July 2011, Henbury Station was purchased by R.M. Williams Agricultural Holdings in partnership with the Federal Government. The land will be naturally regenerated for carbon credits to be sold under a carbon farming initiative. The Park shares 50 percent of its boundary with Henbury Station.

Aboriginal owners and the Parks and Wildlife Commission expressed confidence in the likelihood of an agreement for co-operative management of the area.

In 2004, the Park was included in Schedule 1 of the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*, facilitating the transfer of the land to an Aboriginal Land Trust on the behalf of the traditional Aboriginal owners. The Park was resurveyed into two portions, NTP 6623 (effectively being the part of the Park declared in 1978) and NTP 5787 (which was recommended for grant through the Aboriginal Land Commissioners report). The two portions were scheduled in September 2008 to make up the Lhere Pirnte Aboriginal Land Trust.

To facilitate title transfer the 1978 declaration over the Palm Valley Flora and Fauna Reserve was revoked on 11 June 2010 and Finke Gorge National Park was re-declared a park under section 24(2) *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. A separate process under section 12 of the *TPWC Act* is required to declare NTP 5787 a Park.

On 7 June 2011, title was transferred to the Lhere Pirnte Aboriginal Land Trust to be held on trust for the Traditional Owners and was leased to the Northern Territory for 99 years to be jointly managed as a National Park.

## **1.1 Values of the Park**

### **A Living Cultural Landscape**

The cultural values of the Park stem from the Arrernte Traditional Owners' long association with the area, as demonstrated by archaeological remains, a number of significant sites and strong ongoing cultural connections. For the Traditional Owners, Finke Gorge is a landscape imbued with cultural, spiritual and historical significance that forms part of their contemporary identities.

The European historic values of the Park relate to a small number of historical sites associated with the explorer Ernest Giles and early pastoralism. The ruins of the Boggy Hole Police Camp are of particular significance.

### **An Internationally Significant Botanical Conservation Area**

The Park's international conservation significance derives from the outstanding representation of Central Australian flora and unique collection of rare and relict plants. Over 684 species exist across a wide variety of ecosystems and habitats including sheltered river valleys, gorges and creeks, fed by constant seepage from sandstone aquifers.

The internationally significant assemblage of rare and relict plants and the Park's potential to provide refuge for threatened fauna are of scientific value. Palm Valley is a National Site of Botanical Significance (Harrison et al 2009).

### **A Remote and Tranquil Four-wheel Drive Tourist Destination**

The spectacular landforms, unique palms of Palm Valley, and remote four-wheel drive experience provide the basis of the recreational values of the Park. Approximately 28,400 visitors a year have excellent opportunities for camping, bushwalking and sightseeing.

A variety of interesting geological and ecological features are of education and interpretation value to visitors, scientists and students.

#### **1.2.1 Purpose of the Park**

Finke Gorge National Park is an IUCN Category II National Park, managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation. The Park will continue to be managed as a significant

conservation area and a remote four wheel drive tourist destination. A collaborative approach will ensure effective management of resources and appropriate tourism development.

Priorities will be to:

- Protect and enhance the outstanding natural and cultural values of the Park with particular emphasis on rare and relict plants;
- Provide a range of recreational and cultural experiences consistent with the remote character of the Park; and
- Meet the needs of Traditional Owners to maintain their connection to country and benefit from joint management arrangements.

### **1.1.2 Purpose of the Plan**

This is the first Joint Management Plan for Finke Gorge National Park prepared under Division 4, Part III of the *TPWC Act*. It will remain in effect until amended or replaced by a new plan. A Park Lease and Indigenous Land Use Agreement provide further background to joint management arrangements in respect of the Park.

This Plan gives direction to the day-to-day management of the Park. It also provides the primary framework against which management performance will be measured. Management success will be defined by performance measures developed by the joint management partners.

This plan was prepared by the Parks and Wildlife Service and Traditional Owners with assistance from the Central Land Council. Planning for joint management began in March 2009 with a series of meetings between Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife staff and the Central Land Council. Input was gratefully received from relevant government departments and the public.

## **1.3 Joint Management**

Joint Management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service working together, exchanging knowledge and expertise and sharing decisions for managing the Park. The land subject to this Joint Management Plan was transferred to Aboriginal Freehold Land held by the Lhere Pirnte Aboriginal Land Trust on behalf of Traditional Owners on 7 June 2011. Joint management has authority in law under the *TPWC Act*. The plan complies with the Act and the Park Lease and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement registered under the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*.

### **1.3.1 The Traditional Owners**

The traditional Aboriginal owners of the Park area mostly identify as Arrernte. There are some people that identify specifically as Western, Central and Southern Arrernte (Pertame), and also some as Matuntara people, which is the name of a nearby Western Desert language. The majority of people are fluent in Arrernte and it is their first language.

Traditional Owners continue to observe cultural traditions and uphold traditional law, maintaining powerful connections to their country guided by the traditional Arandic model of land tenure. Under Arrernte law, the ancestors from the *Tnengkerre* (or Dreaming) created everything in the landscape, including sacred sites and other features of the landscape. People identify with relatively well demarcated totemic tracts of country called *pmere* in Western and Southern Arrernte and referred to as 'estates' in anthropological literature. Such areas are identified with groups of people, who are related to each other and to the country

through kinship, affinity, spiritual connection, and acquisition of knowledge of Dreaming stories. Each estate is associated with sites lying on particular Dreaming tracks.

These estates are identified by reference to several ancestral sites that make up a song or story line (Dreaming), or sections of such lines. Estates tend to be strongly centred on a main site and/or the major totemic ancestor. Features within the landscape of the Park are the physical manifestations of these story lines. Land association remains central to Arrernte identity despite the history of contact that has changed and shaped ways in which land ownership and group membership is realised.

Aboriginal people have rights in an estate through descent. They inherit primary rights in country from their father and father's father and are known as *pmerekertweye* ("bosses"). Rights in country through maternal connections are also important and are usually traced through one's mother's father. These people are known as *kwertengwerle* ("managers") and are required for rituals and for "looking after" sites and country for their mother's family. Other descent connections, through the mother's mother, and father's mother, may also be recognised. An additional potential base for affiliating to country in Arrernte tradition is a person's place of conception, or the conception place of one's mother or father.

Although *pmerekertweye* and *kwertengwerle* hold different rights and responsibilities, both must be involved in matters relating to the country for which they hold those rights. Under the land tenure system in this region *pmerekertweye* and (senior) *kwertengerle* are recognised as the core members of a landholding group. This is an important aspect of Aboriginal governance and management of country.

In practice it can be difficult for an individual to maintain connections to all the estate countries they are affiliated to. An individual has to make choices about where to ritually and socially realise his or her rights. This can be achieved by spending much of one's life in a particular area of country and acquiring ritual and ceremonial instructions for it from senior *pmerekertweye* and/or *kwertengwerle*. The strongest rights to country are thus based on being *pmerekertweye* or *kwertengwerle* and knowing the ancestral songs and rituals for that country.

The locality of Finke Gorge National Park is very dense in cultural significance given it was, and still is, a heavily populated area in Central Australia. The conditions of the region made it ecologically favourable for the Arrernte population, with the reliability of permanent water sources.

The Finke River Mission (1877-1982) began after the arrival of Pastors W F Schwarz and A H Kempe. In April 1878 they were joined by a group from Germany and the Lutheran mission settlement was named Hermannsburg. Education and literacy had a primarily religious focus and many baptisms and marriages took place at this time. The early years for Arrernte residents on the mission were plagued with hardships such as illness, lack of medical aid, droughts, severe frosts, and violent confrontations with local station owners and police.

As pastoral activities encroached more and more on Aboriginal homelands and hunting grounds, conflict between local Arrernte and Europeans increased. Police camps were established between 1889 and 1891 at Boggy Hole, and at Illamurta between 1894 and 1912. Constable Willshire was a notorious policeman whose reputation was one of uncompromising brutality. He was appointed, along with four Aboriginal constables, to the Boggy Hole police camp on the Finke River in August 1889. He was eventually arrested in 1891 for the murder of two Aboriginal people at nearby Tempe Downs for an alleged attack on his police camp a year earlier.

In 1894 Pastor Carl Strehlow was sent to Hermannsburg. His arrival saw the restoration of station buildings, dispensing of basic medical care, establishment of a school for the children, and he started learning the Arrernte language. Strehlow undertook extensive linguistic and anthropological investigations while there, which were expanded upon by the work of his son T.G.H Strehlow in later years. Carl Strehlow died in 1922 and was replaced by Friedrich

Wilhelm Albrecht, a German seminary graduate. He arrived in 1926 in the middle of an historic drought. During his time, Aboriginal evangelists were trained and mission centres were set up at Haasts Bluff, Papunya, and Areyonga, with white resident missionaries assisted by Aboriginal evangelists. Evangelists were also sent to cattle stations at Henbury, Napperby, Jay Creek, and Maryvale.

With much of their traditional lands leased to pastoralists, Arrernte previously living in an environment with vast and diverse resources eventually became dependent on a ration based economy associated with mission posts, outstations and homesteads. Many people were forced to move in to Hermannsburg. Access to water and other resources became restricted and much of the landscape was denuded by stock. Severe drought further reduced access to resources and forced Aboriginal people to move from station to station as work became available. In order to survive, Aboriginal people took up ration paying jobs and by the turn of the century low cost Aboriginal labour was fundamental to the establishment of the pastoral industry in central Australia. Arrernte people suffered during the colonial period as their traditional country was targeted by the Government for the expansion of pastoralism in the interior. The establishment of the Lutheran Mission at Hermannsburg also had a profound impact on the lives of local Aboriginal groups, in particular through education and religion.

Members of most Arrernte families in the region lived and worked together on surrounding pastoral stations and at Hermannsburg community for several generations and accordingly, have strong historic associations with the area. Despite the dislocation of many associated with the area, the Arrernte strongly maintain their culture and connection to country. This has been assisted more recently by the grant of land around the northern part of the Park to the Ntaria; Uruna; Roulpmaulpma; Rodna and Ltalaltuma Aboriginal Land Trusts and the hearing of the Palm Valley Land Claim. These events highlighted the strong relationship Aboriginal people have retained with their land.

Hermannsburg is a large community and many outstations in the surrounding area are occupied on a continuous basis. The location of the community in relation to the Park has allowed regular visitation to the area and assisted maintenance of ties to the land, its sacred sites and stories. Due to its history and accessibility, Hermannsburg is a popular destination for tourists. Many Arrernte are involved in tourist ventures within the Park and surrounding area, offering cultural tours and camping for domestic and international tourists. People also live and work in Alice Springs and some travel further to pursue careers and lifestyle. While people may be away from country for long periods of time, their strong attachment to the place remains unbroken.

Traditional Owners are looking forward to the new opportunities afforded by joint management and are proud to have regained title to their land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*. The Tnengkerre remains central to Arrernte life and the Traditional Owners are pleased to have the opportunity to ensure it remains protected and respected by all who visit the area. They are eager to be involved in all management programs in the Park and utilise time spent on country to pass on important knowledge to young people and each other.

### **1.3.2 The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service**

The Parks and Wildlife Service is dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural heritage values of parks and reserves, while providing high-quality nature-based tourism and recreation opportunities for visitors. The Service is committed to joint management and working with adjoining landowners, the community and tourism industry.

This Plan has been developed by the joint management partners with positive intent. Like the Traditional Owners of the Park, the Parks and Wildlife Service is optimistic about the future.

## 2. Park Governance

Joint management involves Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service working together to achieve mutual goals and aspirations, exchange knowledge and expertise and share decisions. A mutual understanding of country, law, culture and Aboriginal decision-making principles are fundamental to making good joint management decisions. For the purpose of joint management, the term **governance** is defined as “the way the partners organise themselves and the rules they put in place to realise their shared vision.” It includes all aspects of partnership, communication, planning and decision-making.

Ensuring the joint management partners have a clear structure and process for making decisions is essential for strong joint management.

### Principles for effective governance

- Decision-making and accountability should be shared equally and reviewed regularly to check that joint management is working well.
- Working together on country is important for “*listening and obeying cultural rules together*” as well as developing mutual trust, respect and understanding between the partners.
- Aboriginal decision-making processes must be respected.
- Management priorities and resource allocation will be guided by the Park’s key values and risk assessment.
- Active participation and employment of Traditional Owners in Park management is central to joint management success.
- Public support for joint management is very important.

### 2.1 Planning and decision-making

Joint management provides exciting new opportunities to make better management decisions based on a combination of Aboriginal and western approaches to land management. Successful joint management relies on a truly equitable partnership that will be measured against the achievement of the aims in this Plan and the satisfaction of the joint management partners.

Traditional Owners’ values and perceptions in relation to looking after country do not always align with conventional park management approaches that emphasise fire, weed and feral animal control. Traditional Owners’ perception of joint management is strongly influenced by what they value most highly – Aboriginal law and extended family. Respecting these differences will significantly assist the partnership and provide the basis for effective joint management and governance of the Park.

While Traditional Owners highlight the importance of involving appropriate senior people in decision making they are also realistic about managing the Park effectively and using resources effectively. They see the need for a governance system that allows a representative group of Traditional Owners to be involved in decision making and recognise their responsibility to “*make sure that person knows everything when another big meeting comes.*”



## Clear Roles and Responsibilities

Clear roles and responsibilities are essential for joint management in accordance with Aboriginal and Northern Territory law (see **Table 1** and **Figure 1**).

- A **Joint Management Committee** will be the principal decision making body for the Park. Its functions are to: share information; review progress against management directions in this Plan; review satisfaction of the partners; review and provide advice regarding policies and procedures development; and provide strategic direction to park operations. The Committee is responsible to the Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service.
- **Traditional Owners** provide an essential contribution to the direction and management of the Park. Core members of landholding groups have responsibilities for decision making and overseeing cultural protocol. They also have responsibilities for managing traditional knowledge and passing it on to the right people, looking after the land and its resources, maintaining sacred sites and keeping the country alive. Traditional Owners are responsible to the land, law and culture.
- The **Parks and Wildlife Service** nominated by the Territory as its representative is a joint management partner with the Park's traditional Aboriginal owners. The Parks and Wildlife Service will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Park under the direction of the Joint Management Committee. The Parks and Wildlife Service is required to finance and resource the Park's ongoing management including administrative functions, staffing, infrastructure and services. Parks employees are responsible to the Chief Executive Officer of the Department.
- The **Central Land Council** is an independent statutory body created under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*, responsible for consulting with and protecting the interests of Traditional Owners of the Park and representing the wishes of local Aboriginal people in relation to Park management.

All joint management decisions will respect Aboriginal law and be consistent with Northern Territory and Commonwealth legislation, the Park Lease, Indigenous Land Use Agreement and Department policy and guidelines.

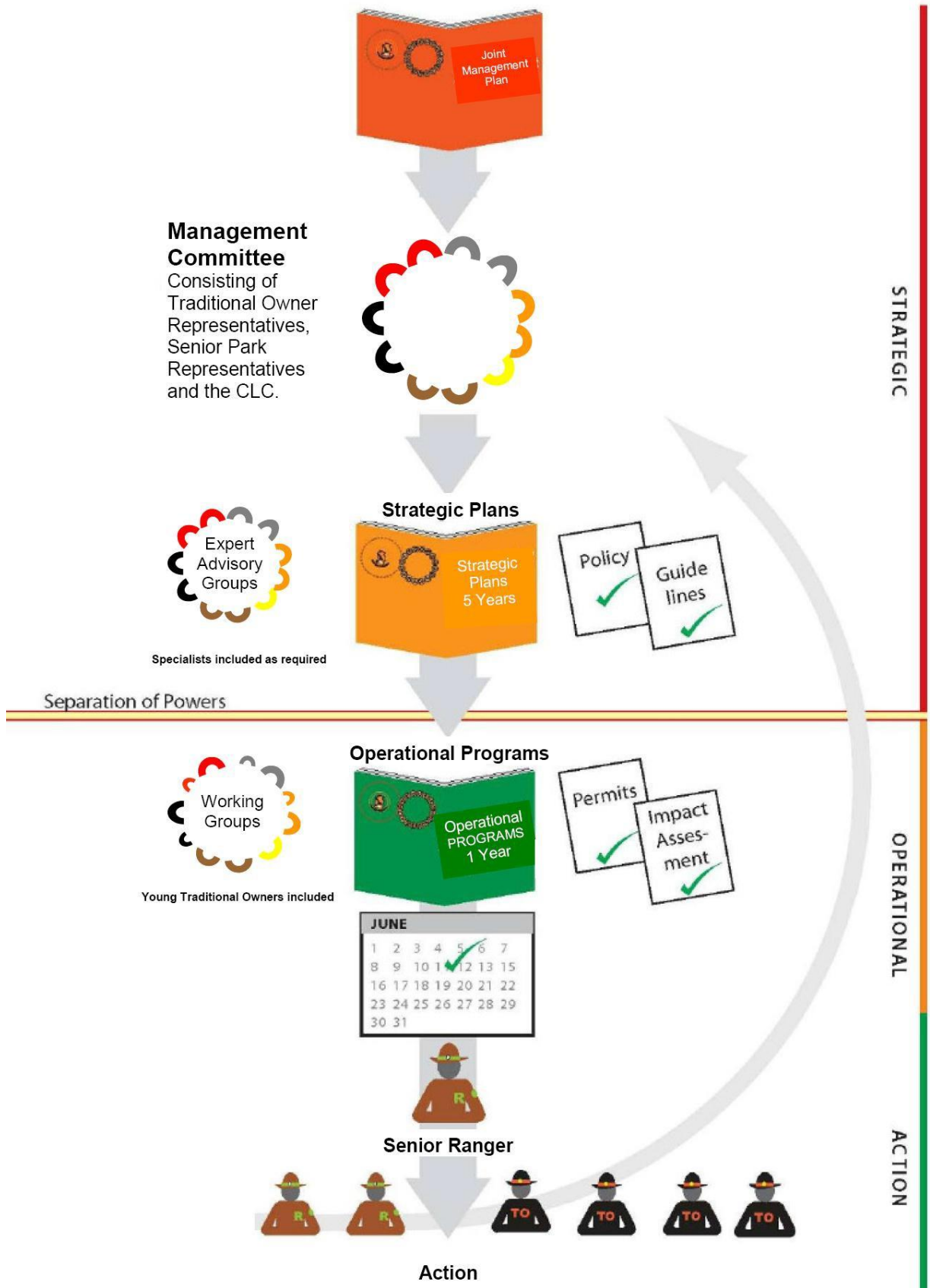
## Effective Governance

The Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Service know that the partnership will need to keep growing and improving through commitment and new skills in governance. Monitoring the partnership and progress against the aims in this Plan is important to build effective joint management and a strong partnership.

**Table 1: Roles and Responsibilities**

Joint Management Committee	Park Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise executive authority and be accountable for the management of the Park.</li> <li>• Consult with community, industry and Government stakeholders.</li> <li>• Provide strategic management direction and advice to Park operations.</li> <li>• Set policy and procedure and consider annual budgets.</li> <li>• Set development direction and criteria to evaluate proposals.</li> <li>• Consider other proposals not specified in this plan.</li> <li>• Monitor and review management performance.</li> <li>• Review and approve management strategies and operational programs for the Park.</li> <li>• Monitor and approve local policy/guidelines and decision-making criteria for permits, contracts, licences and development proposals.</li> <li>• Establish advisory or working groups to address specific tasks.</li> <li>• Consider:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- major changes to infrastructure, access, business operations, commercial activities, mining;</li> <li>- subleasing or licensing land portions for specific purposes, including public infrastructure; and</li> <li>- proposals for living areas and extensions to the area of the Park.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountable for day-to-day management of the Park.</li> <li>• Responsible for implementing operational programs, policy and procedure as approved by the management committee.</li> <li>• Maximise on-ground participation of Traditional Owners in management of the Park.</li> <li>• Report progress to the management committee.</li> <li>• Monitor management effectiveness and adjust management according to new information, improved procedures, new technology and new threats or issues.</li> <li>• Implement approved operational programs according to management strategies.</li> <li>• Undertake day-to-day management operations such as patrols, maintenance, compliance, community relations, and search and rescue.</li> <li>• Issue permits, contracts and licences according to approved policy/guidelines and decision-making criteria.</li> <li>• Issue minor new works contracts, such as those for maintaining, replacing, repairing or improving existing infrastructure.</li> <li>• Employ staff, build capacity and employ Traditional Owners for Park operations wherever possible.</li> </ul>

Figure 1: Park Management and Operations – Roles and Responsibilities



**Planning and Decision Making Aims:**

- An effective, equitable partnership that makes good management decisions.
- Partners and community that are satisfied with the processes and outcomes of joint management.

**Management Directions:**

**2.1 Joint Management Committee** – The Committee will be established as the governing body for the Park. The Committee will meet at least once each year. Membership will consist of at least two senior Parks officers, Traditional Owner representatives and a Central Land Council staff member. Traditional Owners will decide their representatives.

**2.2 Making decisions** – Decisions will be made by consensus. The joint management partners will share decision-making equitably and responsibly according to the framework outlined in **Table 1** and **Figure 1**. Decisions potentially impacting the whole Park require the input of the Joint Management Committee and may require consultation with the full Traditional Owner group.

**2.3 Expert advisory groups and working groups** – Working groups of Traditional Owners, Parks staff, Central Land Council officers and specialists may be formed to support the Committee or address specific tasks including heritage conservation and interpretation.

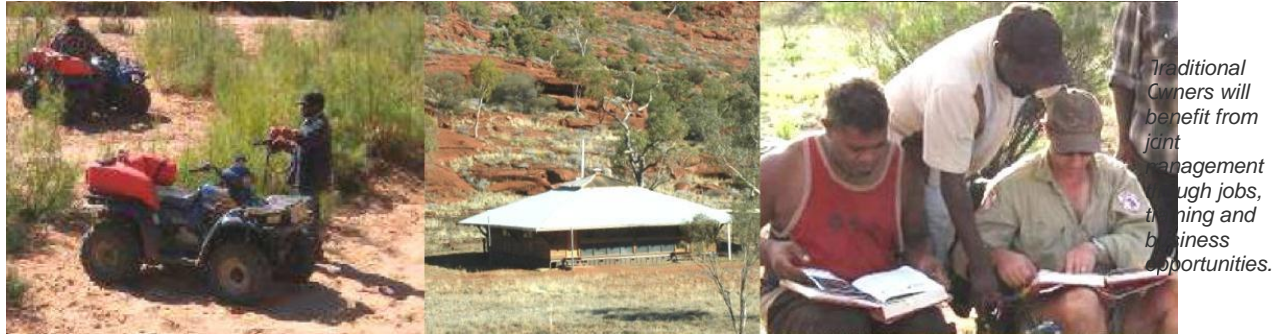
**2.4 Dispute resolution** – The joint management partners will aim to resolve disputes through open discussion and consensus at the Joint Management Committee level. However, should a dispute arise between the joint management partners which cannot be resolved, the partners will follow the dispute resolution process outlined in the Finke Gorge National Park Lease.

**2.5 Supporting and building effective governance** – The joint management partners and the Central Land Council recognise that joint management will be a process of continuous learning and growth. Support and training will be provided to the partners in communication, partnership, planning and governance. The partners will be pro-active in engaging the local community and key stakeholders. The capacity of the joint management partners will be enhanced by:

- **Governance training** – Governance training will be provided to the joint management partners to give them the tools and skills to work effectively in the partnership.
- **Professional development** – Professional standards and staff competencies will be supported by ongoing training in all aspects of park management with special emphasis on cross-cultural training provided by Traditional Owners.
- **Information exchange** – Park operations and the Joint Management Committee will be responsible for passing on information to Traditional Owners, the local community and key stakeholders. The Central Land Council will provide support if required.
- **Community-based Junior Ranger Program** – The partners will engage the local community through a jointly planned and delivered community education program. The Junior Ranger Program will engage Traditional Owners to build joint management capacity and support from an early age.
- **Performance monitoring** – The joint management partners will annually measure performance using indicators relating to: the effectiveness of the joint management partnership (including decision-making processes); the implementation of annually agreed priorities; and achievement towards longer-term aims stated in this Plan.

## 2.2 Business Operations

On-ground work in parks and reserves across the District is directed by a hierarchy of strategies and operational programs that are developed to achieve the aims included in this and related Plans. The Joint Management Committee is responsible for developing long-term strategies and overseeing annual programs implemented by Rangers, Traditional Owners, contractors and volunteers. The Committee's role will be to match priorities and new information with available staff and budgets to best achieve the vision and aims of this Plan.



### Aboriginal Training, Employment and Enterprise Development

It is important that joint management helps support sustainable livelihoods for Traditional Owners' families, particularly those that live near the Park. Traditional Owners look forward to new opportunities in working on country and applying their knowledge and skills to better look after the Park. Traditional Owners also recognise support is available if they are willing to take up new opportunities created through joint management.

Throughout the joint planning process, the Traditional Owners emphasised the importance of accredited training and employment for their families and acknowledged their responsibility to support young people. Traditional Owners say *"We all got to work together, look after country, create jobs for people. We got to work on our land. Work for our young people, other Traditional Owners' kids, grandchildren."* Helping local Indigenous people develop the skills needed to work as rangers is important for achieving the shared vision of a park staffed by rangers with practical, long-term cultural commitment to looking after the area.

Flexible employment offered by the Parks and Wildlife Service has provided work experience, skills exchange and accredited training to some Traditional Owners and local Aboriginal people and has led to the development of a community ranger group at Hermannsburg. Known as the Tjuwanpa Rangers, their numbers and experience have enabled them to successfully complete contracted work on nearby parks and Aboriginal land.

The Finke Gorge National Park Lease provides that the Northern Territory Government must give preference to the participation of the traditional Aboriginal owners of the Park in any commercial activities conducted under the Lease, subject to any law in force in the Northern Territory. Interested Traditional Owners will be supported by the Parks and Wildlife Service to gain skills, accreditation and business development support.

It is important to acknowledge that the broader employment aspirations of Traditional Owners and their families cannot be met by joint management alone. Consequently, employment and training plans developed by the partners will need to be developed within a local and regional context and involve other groups and organisations. Traditional Owners identified a range of employment opportunities during planning meetings including: park & community rangers, tour guides, apprenticeships and family businesses.

## **Management, Resources and Operations for Joint Management**

Practically all funding to manage Finke Gorge National Park and develop services and facilities is provided by the Northern Territory Government, allocated as a share of funds to manage this Park and all other parks and reserves across the Northern Territory Parks Estate. In a similar way, works funded through the minor and capital works programs are subject to whole of Government and Departmental priorities. Greater co-operation and linkages between government departments and agencies is required to support joint management implementation and achieve positive socio-economic and environmental outcomes.

A Management Effectiveness Framework has been developed by the Parks and Wildlife Service to prioritise each park's contribution to the Northern Territory Parks Estate and resource allocation. Finke Gorge National Park is one of the most valuable parks for biodiversity conservation and regional tourism.

The remoteness of the Park requires a level of self-sufficiency. Management facilities consist of a modest office, a well equipped workshop and three staff houses are located on the Park. Ongoing training is important to maintain and develop competent and professional Park staff. Training in cross-cultural communication and governance are high priorities.

Volunteers and Sydney University have provided invaluable contribution to park management programs on the Park over several years. Future activities should include opportunities for cross-cultural learning and working together.

The joint management partners have an obligation to protect the natural and cultural values of the Park and a duty of care to park visitors. Effective use of limited resources hinges on integrated operational planning. Annual fire, weed and feral animal control plans are based on protecting park values, risk minimisation and long-term strategies of five years or more. Co-ordination and integration of plans into a prioritised, annual Operational Plan is essential to maximise resource use and effectiveness.

## **Research, Survey and Monitoring**

Information about the Park's values, environmental trends and the effectiveness of management actions assists decision making for park management. Data on visitor numbers, demographics, behaviour and satisfaction levels is also useful to guide visitor management and planning.

Most research, survey and monitoring programs are carried out as internal projects by the Parks and Wildlife Service or its Department. Sydney University has conducted valuable research and monitoring programs over several years in the Park. Traditional Owners have knowledge of the Park that may contribute to research outcomes. It is important that Traditional Owners are consulted about, and invited to participate in, research, survey and monitoring projects and, where possible, employed in this work.

Research by external agencies or individuals is encouraged. A permit is required if handling or interfering with wildlife under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws*. Local guidelines for research permits are required to ensure protection of park values and Indigenous intellectual and cultural property. It is important that the outcomes of research projects are communicated to the joint management partners.

## **Permits, Commercial Activities and Development Proposals**

Permits issued under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws* are required for activities that involve special access, use of any part of the Park for commercial purposes or various other uncommon activities. This includes: research, public gatherings, aircraft operation, commercial tourism and commercial photography.

Permit conditions are aimed at ensuring accurate and appropriate promotion of the Park and minimising negative impacts on park values and other park users. It is important that the

permit application and approvals process is clear and efficient. The Joint Management Committee will be responsible for developing practical local guidelines for commercial activities including film and photography. Some permits may require supervision by Parks and Wildlife staff and / or Traditional Owners and may incur a fee.

Tour companies require a Tour Operator Permit under the TPWC By-laws. The Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service want information given by tour operators to be accurate and appropriate as tour operators can have a strong influence on visitors' experiences of the Park. The Tour Operator Permit System provides a means for the joint management partners to better liaise with tour operators, and to monitor the activities of tour groups.

A permit is required to operate a business in a Park, such as a tourism concession. A licence or sub-lease may be issued for the occupation or specific use of an area. Under the Park Lease the Northern Territory must give preference to the participation of the traditional Aboriginal owners of the Park in any commercial activities conducted, subject to any relevant laws in the Northern Territory. Some Traditional Owners have expressed interest in revitalising their stake in the local tourism industry.

Development proposals must be consistent with any applicable laws in force, Departmental policies, and will be subject to assessment by the joint management partners to ensure the natural and cultural values of the Park are not impacted. Protection for sacred sites is provided by the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* and the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*. Registered heritage sites and prescribed Aboriginal archaeological places and objects are subject to clearances under the *Heritage Conservation Act*. Significant development may be subject to the *Environmental Assessment Act* and/ or the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*.

## **Mining**

The area is known for its natural gas reserves and continues to draw interest from exploration companies. A petroleum licence (EP OL3) over the northern part of the Park was renewed in 2003 and is due to expire in 2024. Mining and extractive activities have the potential to adversely impact the scenic, natural and cultural values of the Park. Under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*, Traditional Owners have the right to control mining on Aboriginal Land.

## **Relations with Community and Neighbours**

Park neighbours, Tourism NT, the wider tourism industry and the community have been consulted in the management of the Park for many years. Joint management arrangements will not change this situation. The Park is a public asset and the partners are jointly accountable to the community. Managing issues and influences beyond the park boundary, cooperating with neighbours and integrating park management activities will enhance visitor experiences and land management programs. Henbury Station is now a private conservation area which presents significant opportunities for cooperative management between the two properties for conservation outcomes.

The Territory Eco-link is a long-term Northern Territory Government initiative to link parks from the tropical savannahs of the Top End to the desert of Central Australia through a network of public and voluntary private conservation arrangements. Finke Gorge National Park lies within the conservation corridor and borders a number of Aboriginal Land Trusts and pastoral lands (see **Figure 2**). This initiative could provide the impetus for cross-tenure land management programs between the Parks and Wildlife Service and neighbours for conservation outcomes and to some extent, visitor access and safety.

The Northern Territory Government is pursuing World Heritage Listing of the West MacDonnell National Park. Finke Gorge National Park may also be included in any future nomination.



**Business Operations Aims:**

- The Aims and Directions in this Plan achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities.
- Traditional Owners benefiting economically through Park related employment and business.
- An improved knowledge base and clear processes for strong decision-making.
- A community that is engaged in and supportive of joint management

**Management Directions:**

**2.6 Indigenous training, employment and enterprise development** – A rolling program for training, employment and enterprise development based on Traditional Owners' interests and capacity will be determined and reviewed annually by the partners. Where the Parks and Wildlife Service cannot directly assist, accredited training and business development support will be provided to Traditional Owners through coordination with other relevant Northern Territory Government departments and agencies.

- **Indigenous employment opportunities** – The partners will continue to identify and provide opportunities for flexible and direct employment and training for Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal ranger traineeship program will continue as a means to increase opportunities for local people to become rangers.
- **Contract services** – Traditional Owners and Aboriginal organisations they support will be preferred service providers where capacity to meet contract requirements is demonstrated and subject to any applicable laws in force in the Northern Territory. Other contractors providing training and employment to local Aboriginal people will be strongly encouraged to apply.
- **Tourism** – Traditional Owners will continue to be encouraged to take up commercial tourism opportunities including camp fire talks, campground maintenance, cultural tours or other viable enterprises. Appropriate support will be provided and agencies such as the Central Land Council, Tourism Central Australia and Tourism NT will be requested to assist with developing ideas and identifying service providers to assist with developing business plans, skills and funding sources. The joint management partners will liaise with the tourism industry through established forums and organisations as required.

**2.7 Operational Plans** – Prioritised Operational Plans will be developed annually based on protection of the Park's key values and assessment of risks or threats to them. The joint management partners will have an equal role in the annual planning and review of management programs and operational plans for the Park. Operational planning will pay particular attention to:

- Vision, principles, core values, aims and directions of this Plan.
- Regional priorities, available resources and external funding options.
- Paid Traditional Owner participation in on-ground programs.
- Listening and responding to concerns raised by the partners, neighbours and the public.
- Integrating management programs.
- Encouraging and supporting local business.

**2.8 Financing** – Parks and Wildlife will finance and resource the Park’s ongoing management including administrative functions, staff, infrastructure and services. Partnerships with private industry in provision of infrastructure and visitor services will be encouraged and considered by the partners. External funding may be sought for specific projects.

**2.9 Living areas, subleases and expansion of the Park** – Proposals for living areas, subleases or expansion of the Park will be considered initially by the joint management partners through the Joint Management Committee. Wider consultation and full consideration of the issues will take place as appropriate. Decisions will be endorsed by the Joint Management Committee. Living Areas and subleases will be subject to environmental impact assessment, Departmental policies and locally developed guidelines.

**2.10 Permits – Delegated Parks and Wildlife staff** will have the authority on behalf of the Joint Management Committee to endorse standard permit applications that involve an approved activity, require no special access, are low impact and in keeping with Traditional Owners wishes. The **Joint Management Committee** will develop local policies and guidelines for assessing special access or activity permits.

- The Committee may be convened to consider applications if an activity or permit application involves special access or activities. Traditional Owners from the affected area must be consulted.
- Any proposal involving significant disturbance of previously undeveloped areas of the Park may be referred to the Environment and Heritage Division of the Department to aid decision-making or set development guidelines.
- Activities or proposals that are culturally sensitive, large or complex, or part of a major commercial project will require the Committee to fully consider all details before passing the application to the **full Traditional Owner group** for consideration.
- **Commercial activities and development proposals** – Commercial activities and development proposals will be subject to the approval of the partners, relevant legislation, Departmental policy and will not compromise the values of the Park as described in this Plan. Preference will be given to commercial activities which benefit Traditional Owners and subject to any relevant laws in force in the Northern Territory.

### **2.11 Research, survey and monitoring**

- **Scientific research, survey and monitoring** – Programs will be described in Operational Plans and be subject to annual review by the joint management partners. Guidelines developed by the partners will maximise participation by Traditional Owners and employment in research, survey and monitoring projects and incorporation of Indigenous knowledge where appropriate.
- **External research** – Researchers will require a permit that is consistent with TPWC By-laws, Park policies and guidelines including ICIP. Wildlife researchers require permits to interfere with, take or keep wildlife. Parks and Wildlife staff and Traditional Owners should be consulted in developing research proposals.
- **Visitor monitoring** – Visitor monitoring projects will be determined by the partners. Visitors will be counted with traffic counters or other reliable means. Qualitative surveys will be conducted at least every third year. Visitor comments sheets will continue to be collected and recorded. Data will be used by the joint management partners for planning and decision-making.

- **Park Reporting** – Every five years, the partners will review the implementation of this Plan and prepare a State of the Park Report, reporting on the condition of key values and recommending adaptive changes to management if appropriate.

**2.12 Excavation, mining and exploration** – Soil and gravel will be extracted for soil conservation works in the Park with the approval of the partners. External requests for excavation will require a written application that will be subject to the approval of the joint management partners and pursuant to a permit under the TPWC By-laws. The partners will discuss protecting parts of the Park from mining. Fossicking will not be allowed.

**2.13 Community engagement** – Neighbours and local stakeholders will be encouraged to work with the joint management partners in matters of mutual interest, consulting annually with the partners in conservation and tourism matters, resolving issues and developing opportunities including those that are related to the Park's interests, but lie outside its boundary.

- The established **volunteer** program will continue on the basis that it will not compromise or compete with Traditional Owners' aspirations or opportunities.
- Park staff will continue to regularly liaise with neighbours and community ranger groups to support cooperative management in the use and control of fire, control of stock and feral animals, weed control and soil conservation across tenures.
- The partners will work with the tourism industry and relevant agencies to ensure park images and messages are accurate and appropriate.

**2.14 World Heritage Listing** – The partners will consider the benefits of the Park being included in the World Heritage nomination for the West MacDonnell Ranges.

## 3. Zoning

The Park is managed for multiple purposes and different areas of the Park will be managed differently. The zoning scheme is a general summary of the purpose and focus of management for all areas of the Park, based on the specific values of those areas and their level of visitor access and facility development.

The zoning scheme indicates management intent at the time of this Plan's preparation. It is not intended to be a basis for regulation of access or development and may be changed during the term of this Plan to provide for improved protection of values and / or enhancement of visitor opportunities. Three management zones are identified for Finke Gorge National Park:

- **Visitor Zone** – areas that provide for concentrated tourism experiences, while retaining unspoiled vistas and natural appearance of the Park.
- **Conservation Zone** – areas that provide for nature / culturally-based recreational experiences requiring personal space and solitude, while sustaining natural processes.
- **Special Protection Zone** – marks areas or sites of exceptional conservation and / or cultural significance. Unmarked areas may be equally sensitive but are not shown for reasons of protection. Boundaries are indicative only.

**Zoning Aim:**

- Park values protected whilst providing for public access and enjoyment.

**Management Directions:**

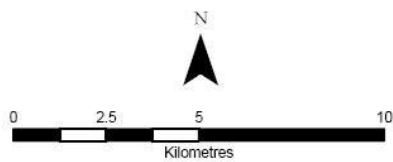
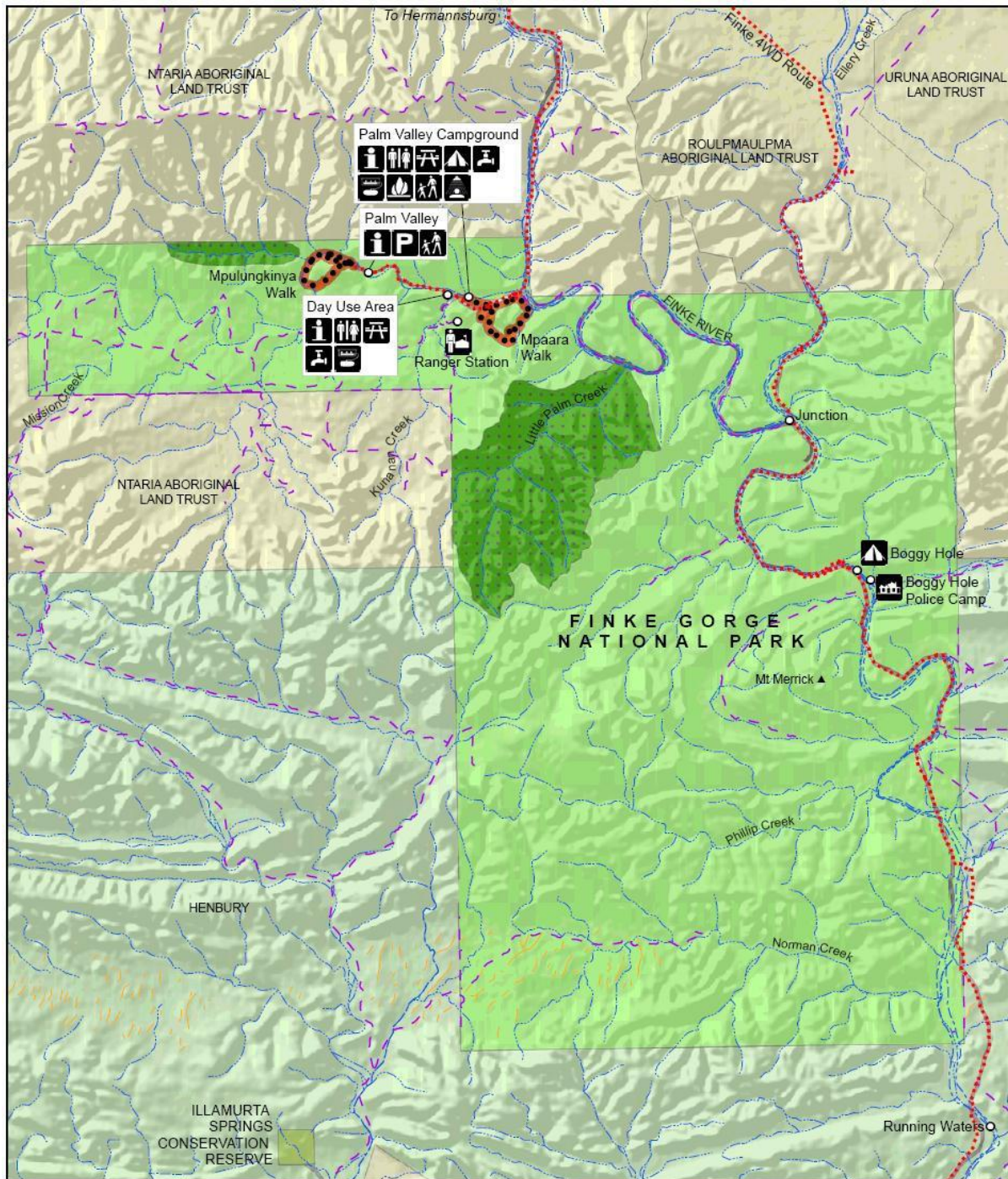
**3.1 Zoning** – Management of the Park will be in accordance with the zoning scheme (**Table 2, Figure 2**).

**3.2 Development** - Regardless of the designated zone all management and development will have regard to maintaining the Park’s natural character and conservation values. Any new development will be subject to the approval of the partners and appropriate environmental, sacred site and cultural heritage clearances and protection measures.

**Table 2: Zoning Scheme**

	<b>Visitor Zone</b>	<b>Conservation Zone</b>	<b>Special Protection Zone</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Concentrated visitor use whilst minimising negative impacts.	Controlled visitor use for experiencing remote undeveloped areas of the Park.	Protection of natural and cultural values.
<b>Management Focus</b>	Maintenance and presentation of high standard facilities, interpretation and visitor safety.	Land conservation programs; fire, weed and feral animal management. Minimising and monitoring visitor impacts.	Protection of culturally significant sites, threatened species and biodiversity hotspots from impacts of fire, weeds and feral animals.
<b>Visitor Access</b>	Access for four wheel drive vehicles on designated tracks. Marked walking trails for pedestrian access.	Overnight visitor access by permit only or in connection with approved concession.	Visitor access strictly controlled, by permit only.
<b>Visitor Activity</b>	Camping, picnicking, walking, swimming, fishing, photography and nature appreciation.	Self-reliant bush walking, research and commercial tourism (including bush camping) under permit.	Scientific research, survey and monitoring under permit. Interpretation of specific values where appropriate.
<b>Facilities</b>	Campground, parking areas, walking tracks, picnic facilities, shade shelters, interpretive signs, toilets, emergency facilities.	Park management and environmental protection facilities. General provision for nature-based tourism under terms of concession permit.	Facilities necessary to ensure protection of values, ie. fences, vehicle barriers, interpretation.

Figure 2: Zoning Scheme





## 4. Managing Country

Finke Gorge National Park is valued by the joint management partners and the wider community for its remoteness, unique palms, scenic beauty and rich cultural associations. This Plan encourages the joint management partners, neighbours<sup>ii</sup> and the wider community to work together to conserve Finke Gorge's significant natural and cultural values

Joint management requires a new way of looking at managing country. Under customary law, Aboriginal people and land are seen as one, and country is defined by sites and Dreamings. Traditional Owners of the Park have an obligation to maintain the cultural integrity of the area.

Caring for country in a joint management context requires cross-cultural understanding and respect to ensure that the Park is looked after properly in a way that involves both partners, combining western science with Indigenous knowledge.

### Principles for Managing Country

- Managing country means managing natural and cultural values together.
- Management activities should protect and enhance Park values.
- Management of cultural knowledge is the responsibility of Traditional Owners.
- The Burra Charter provides sound guidance for conserving cultural and historical values.

### 4.1 Aboriginal and Historical Values

The heritage values of Finke Gorge National Park are a combination of the physical landscape overlain with a rich layer of tangible and intangible cultural attributes. The Park contains a number of sacred sites, a large number of archaeological sites and a few historical sites. When combined, these remind us of at least 30,000 years of human occupation, adaptation and innovation.

The majority of sites are relatively undisturbed and located in remote areas of the Park. Several sites may be significant; however there has been limited assessment of their significance and heritage value, especially their significance to relevant Traditional Owners. It is important that archaeological sites are protected from visitor impacts and historical sites conserved until their heritage value is determined.



*Arrente people have maintained strong cultural connections to their land, despite many hardships.*

<sup>ii</sup> The Park shares 50 percent of its boundary, a range of natural and cultural values and management issues with Henbury Station, a private conservation area.

## A Continued Cultural Connection to Country

Containing some of the largest and most permanent waters in Central Australia, the Finke River has sustained an ancient people during the most prolonged droughts. Known as *Lhere Pirnte* by the Arrernte Traditional Owners, the river and its surrounds comprise a living landscape of cultural, spiritual and historical significance.

The cultural landscape that exists today is testimony to Aboriginal people's resilience and ability to adapt over time. Hermannsburg, pastoralism and religion are key features of the past that have shaped and defined the lives of Traditional Owners today. Arrernte people have maintained strong connections and deep attachment to their country, despite the effects of colonialism and the efforts of many to undermine traditional practices and Aboriginal law.

Under the laws from the Tnengkerre or Dreaming, the Traditional Owners of Finke Gorge National Park are responsible for country and are obliged to maintain and protect it. To ensure country is properly cared for, they continue to pass information onto the next generation by "*showing our ancestors' history there, how to look after it.*" They continue to hold ceremonies and attend meetings for spiritual and secular purposes relating to the area. Restricted ceremonies are occasionally held on important sites within the Park.

Traditional Owners have detailed knowledge of bush foods and medicines including where and when to find them, and how to use them. Hunting and gathering are important activities for maintaining connection to country and passing knowledge on to the next generation. Traditional Owners exercise their right to hunt wildlife and gather bush foods and medicine in accordance with Aboriginal tradition, and as permitted under the *TPWC Act*.

### Pre and Post-contact Sites

Pre and post-contact sites are an important part of the cultural landscape and many are significant to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. They are tangible reminders of the continuity and change Traditional Owners and their country have endured.

- **Aboriginal Occupation Sites** - Numerous occupation sites occur along the Finke River, consistent with it being a major trade and travel route for the central ranges and western desert Aboriginal people. The large permanent waterhole at Boggy Hole (*Litharra*) is particularly significant. Several rock painting and engraving sites are located throughout the Park. Archaeological evidence at the upper Finke River catchment indicates approximately 30,000 years of occupation, with more intensive use of resources occurring in the last 1,000 years.
- **Sacred Sites** - The Park contains many places of spiritual significance and a number of dreaming trails traverse the country, linking the area culturally to places far away. A number of sacred sites have been recorded in the Park and are protected under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*.
- **Boggy Hole Police Camp** - Established in 1889 by Constable Willshire to "pacify" suspected cattle killers, this site has an infamous association with repression of local Aboriginal people. The stone ruin is on the Register of the National Estate and may, in the future, be listed on the NT Heritage Register for its significant heritage value.
- **Cocky's Camp** - A timber post and rail cattle yard associated with early pastoral activity on what was once Henbury Station. Known as Cocky's Camp, this site in the south-east of the Park is seldom visited, but potentially offers good interpretive material for visitors.
- **Bonds Tours Campground** - Established in 1933, Bonds Tours were the first commercial tours to bring visitors from the Finke River Mission Station (Hermannsburg) to a camp on Palm Creek. Several huts were erected on the site in the early 1950's. All structures were eventually removed in 1976 and the Palm Valley campground now occupies the original site.



### *Cultural Heritage Clearances*

It is important that significant places, rock art and archaeological material in the Park are protected. The *Heritage Conservation Act* gives specific protection to prescribed Aboriginal archaeological places and objects in the Northern Territory. Archaeological places may also be sacred sites and protected by the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* and the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*. The partners are required to consult with Northern Territory Heritage Officers and seek cultural heritage clearance for any proposed works at those sites. Sacred site clearances should also be sought for all archaeological sites on the Park.

### *Sacred Site Clearances*

Protection for places that are of cultural significance in the Northern Territory is afforded under overlapping legislation. The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* gives legal recognition to areas which that Act terms “sacred sites” and defines as: “a site that is sacred to Aboriginals or is otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal tradition, and includes any land that, under a law of the Northern Territory, is declared to be sacred to Aboriginals or of significance according to Aboriginal tradition”. The Act makes it an offence to enter or remain on land that is a sacred site.

Complementary Northern Territory legislation, the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act (NTASS Act)* also provides protection for all sites that fall within the scope of this definition. This protection is generally provided in the form of an Authority Certificate from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority in response to land use proposals. It means that the traditional Aboriginal owners have an enforceable right to say who enters their sacred sites, and what cannot happen on their sacred sites. Illegal entry, works on or use of a sacred site is an offence under the *NTASS Act*.

Strong joint management will ensure that sacred sites are protected in accordance with Traditional Owners’ wishes. Under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* the Central Land Council has a specific function to “assist Aboriginals in the taking of measures likely to assist in the protection of sacred sites” and under its established procedures will carry out this role in facilitating joint management.

### *Indigenous Intellectual and Cultural Property*

Indigenous Intellectual and Cultural Property (ICIP) refers to the cultural heritage of Aboriginal people, as defined by Aboriginal people. The definition of ICIP is necessarily broad and inclusive. For Aboriginal owners, ICIP includes objects, places, practices, knowledge and ideas that have a wide range of social, spiritual, historic and other values which are intrinsic to their identities and relationships, including relationships with country. The Parks and Wildlife Service, together with the Central Land Council, supports Traditional Owners in their expressed desire to protect, promote and develop their ICIP.

#### **Cultural Values Aims:**

- Traditional Owners satisfied with protection of cultural sites and intellectual property.
- Historic sites properly documented, assessed and conserved as appropriate.

#### **Management Directions:**

**4.1 Aboriginal cultural business** – Parks and Wildlife will respect Traditional Owners’ advice relating to cultural matters and customary obligations. Ample notice will be given to the public regarding temporary closures for cultural purposes where possible.

**4.2 Hunting and gathering** – Rights in relation to hunting and gathering from the Park for traditional purposes will extend to Traditional Owners and Aboriginals who have

traditionally used the area in accordance with Aboriginal tradition. A hunting and gathering policy will be developed by the Joint Management Committee and approved by all Traditional Owners.

**4.3 Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)** – Traditional Owners will retain ownership and control of their cultural and intellectual property consistent with policy agreed between the Central Land Council and the Parks and Wildlife Service.

**4.4 “Back to Country” program** – The partners will spend time on country together, facilitating transmission of cultural knowledge and skills between Traditional Owner families, to the younger generation and to the rangers, as appropriate. As required, the program will be supported by the Central Land Council.

**4.5 Culturally sensitive areas** – Parks and Wildlife will uphold restrictions and guidelines for sacred sites or culturally sensitive areas of the Park as directed by the Central Land Council consistent with Traditional Owners’ wishes.

**4.6 Sacred site clearances** – The Central Land Council will have sacred site clearance responsibility for all proposed work on the Park. However the joint management partners may agree from time to time require a person who proposes to carry out work on the Park to apply for an Authority Certificate under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*, issued by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.

**4.7 Cultural heritage clearances** – Expert assessment will be sought to ensure compliance with the *Heritage Conservation Act* for works to prescribed Aboriginal archaeological places and objects in the Park, historical sites and any significant development requiring soil disturbance. Sacred site clearances through the Central Land Council will also be sought for works to any archaeological sites on the Park.

**4.8 Managing Aboriginal and historical values** – The joint management partners will develop a cultural heritage management program and guidelines for the Park with input from the Central Land Council. The partners and the Central Land Council will work together to identify supporting resources if required. The cultural heritage program will provide for:

- **Archaeological and historic site assessment.** Sites will be properly documented and assessed for their significance and heritage value, including significance to relevant Traditional Owners where appropriate. The Burra Charter principles and process will guide this assessment.
  - Existing cultural heritage information will be consolidated and Traditional Owners consulted as to its appropriate storage and future use.
  - Research, including recording oral histories and Indigenous knowledge, will be encouraged where resulting knowledge is expected to contribute to site assessment. Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property will be protected as per **4.3**.
  - Potential nomination of the Boggy Hole Police Station ruins to the NT Heritage Register will be discussed by the Joint Management Committee and affected Traditional Owners consulted.
- **Aboriginal and historic site conservation.** Sites will be maintained until they can be properly assessed for their significance and heritage value.
  - A conservation management plan for the Boggy Hole Police Station site will be developed and implemented by the partners. Works will be subject to Territory wide prioritisation and funding.
  - Sites of cultural significance will be identified within special fire protection areas in the Fire Management Strategy and protected as part of the annual Fire Management Plan.

- Sites exhibiting evidence of past occupation and continuing traditions may be made accessible and interpreted for the public, subject to obtaining the permission of affected Traditional Owners and provided the sites are adequately protected.

## 4.2 Natural and Ecological Values

Finke Gorge National Park is known for its outstanding representation of Central Australian flora, remarkable geology and reliable waters that provide refuge for many threatened, endemic and disjunct species. Maintaining this biological diversity requires a good understanding of species requirements, ecosystem dynamics and threatening processes. Aboriginal people hold knowledge that can contribute significantly to this understanding and the effectiveness of management programs.



*Threatened species will benefit from the integration of Aboriginal knowledge and western techniques.*

### Botanical Diversity

Finke Gorge National Park is a valuable contributor to biodiversity conservation within the internationally significant MacDonnell Ranges Bioregion. Many of the 684 plant species recorded across the Park occur in the “biodiversity hotspots,” associated with the springs of Palm Valley, the lower slopes of the Amphitheatre and the Little Palm Creek catchment. These areas of high conservation value are variously threatened and are identified within the Special Protection Zone (see **Figure 2**).

The Palm Valley springs, seepages and rockholes (including Kunanan Creek), contain many rare, relict and endemic species including the unique and nationally threatened Red Cabbage Palm and MacDonnell Ranges Cycad. Of the plant species recorded from Central Australia, one quarter have been collected from Palm Valley alone, making it a site of national botanical significance. It is important to protect the sensitive spring areas and palm seedlings from uncontrolled visitor access, feral herbivores, localised aquifer draw-down and potential soil-borne pathogens.

Little Palm Creek contains the most significant stands of Red Cabbage Palm outside Palm Valley. It is also an important area for fire sensitive species such as Caustic Bush, Hill Mulga, Holey Trunk Mulga, Native Pine and the threatened Palm Valley Myrtle. The integrity of the catchment relies on its protection from unplanned fires, introduced grasses, large feral animals and public access.

The steep, calcrete slopes of the lower Amphitheatre area support many slow growing, fire sensitive species including the nationally threatened Minnie Daisy. Healthy areas should be monitored and protected from Buffel Grass invasion as they are particularly vulnerable to increased fuel loads and fire-induced erosion.

## Reliable Wetlands

The gently folded and uplifted sandstones of the James and Krichauff Ranges are naturally porous, providing permanent groundwater discharge to the springs and seepages of the Park and contributing to the waterholes of the Finke River system.

The permanent waters of Boggy Hole and semi-permanent waterholes of the Park are regionally significant and some of the largest and oldest wetlands in Central Australia. They provide suitable habitat and breeding grounds for a number of frogs, fish and waterbirds including the nationally threatened Finke Goby and Australian Painted Snipe. Other notable vagrants include the Australian Pelican, Black Swan, Jabiru and Osprey.

Wetlands are particularly vulnerable to impacts associated with feral herbivores and pollutants (effluent, insecticides, sunscreens and detergents). Stock are actively excluded from the Park by strategic fencing. Low-impact bush camping is allowed along the Finke River Four Wheel Drive Route. Further research is required to measure the health of these high-value aquatic ecosystems and their management requirements. Traditional Owners are particularly keen to see camping impacts reduced at these culturally significant sites, requesting rangers to *“make sure it’s clean, no pollution.”*

Sections of the Finke River and Ellery Creek have been affected by extensive flooding, Buffel Grass and Couch Grass infestation. Many mature River Red Gums with nesting hollows were lost during the 1988 floods, highlighting the importance of protecting the remaining trees and riparian vegetation from campfire outbreaks, weed spread and accelerated soil erosion. Community and visitor education and the reduction of unofficial tracks along these “access corridors” are aimed at protecting remnant vegetation.

## Concentration of Threatened Species

Finke Gorge National Park contains many species of conservation significance including six nationally threatened species and 11 species threatened at the Territory level (see **Appendix 1**). Of the 684 plant species recorded in the Park, four species are threatened, 23 species are classified as near-threatened, 16 species as endemic and 10 species as relict and disjunct.

The iconic Red Cabbage Palm of Palm Valley occurs solely in Central Australia, with almost the entire population occurring within Finke Gorge National Park. Palm seedlings are vulnerable to crowding by introduced grasses and trampling by large feral animals and humans. Mature palms may be threatened by fire-induced soil erosion if fuel levels are high. A recent palm census indicates the palm population to be stable or increasing following the exclusion of large feral animals from the Park and visitors from Little Palm Creek. Visitor education and improved track definition through Palm Valley would enhance existing conservation efforts.

The MacDonnell Ranges Cycad occurs amongst the rocky gorges of Palm Valley, with an impressive display at Cycad Gorge. Landscape-scale fire management is aimed at reducing the frequency and intensity of fire across its known range. Low-key monitoring indicates that illegal seed collection, considered a threat in parts of the MacDonnell bioregion, is not an immediate concern in this Park.

Minnie Daisy and Palm Valley Myrtle are reasonably plentiful in the Park occurring on the lower calcrete slopes of the Amphitheatre area and the steeply dissected rocky sandstone gullies of Palm Valley respectively. Both species are highly susceptible to Buffel Grass invasion, high fuel loads and erosion following high rainfall. These species would benefit from weed control, reduced fuel loads and long-term monitoring.

The Park contains 12 mammal species, 47 reptile species, 112 bird species, eight frog species, eight fish species and numerous invertebrate fauna. Several species are significant due to their conservation status, endemism or distribution range (see **Appendix 1**).

Healthy populations of Slater's Skink have been mapped and monitored in various habitats across the northern part of the Park since 2006. Known warrens in Palm Paddock and Little Palm Creek are actively protected from Buffel Grass invasion, wildfire and human disturbance. Survey, monitoring and conservation efforts will continue.

Black-footed Rock-wallaby are frequently seen in the steep-sided rocky outcrops of the Amphitheatre area and Palm Valley. A simple monitoring program indicates increased numbers since the exclusion of large grazing animals, however they would further benefit from reduced numbers of feral predators (foxes and cats) and competition from rabbits.

Land Snails are commonly found amongst rock rubble and fig leaf litter across the northern part of the Park. Three of the five species recorded are only reserved within Finke Gorge National Park, including the endemic *Basedowena squamulosa*. Areas known to contain Land Snails are checked periodically and may require protection from Buffel Grass and wildfires if there is no natural protection.

The Finke Goby is a highly localised fish confined to the permanent waterholes of the upper Finke River. Threats include degradation of riparian vegetation and illegal net fishing. Their presence was confirmed at Boggy Hole in 2009, initiating a waterhole monitoring project to determine their status and establish baseline data for assessing the health of these important aquatic ecosystems.

The Common Brushtail Possum is restricted to a few isolated locations of riverine habitat in Central Australia. They are thought to exist in Finke Gorge National Park and Rangers opportunistically search their preferred habitat for possum sign, and protect large River Red Gums from wildfire.

Emus are sometimes sighted in the southern Finke River, despite a couple of unsuccessful Emu reintroductions in the north of the Park. Australian Bustards are occasionally observed in Norman Gully. Both species are in decline in the Northern Territory and thought to be under threat from hunting. Agreement with Traditional Owners to hunt within sustainable limits and predator reduction will benefit these birds.

Australian Painted Snipe and other vagrant waterbirds are occasionally observed at shallow, vegetated waterholes within the Park. Stock exclusion and subsequent recovery of wetlands have benefited these species, much to the delight of bird watchers. Disturbance from campers during critical times of the year remains a management concern.

## **Protecting the Park's Ecology**

Over the years extensive flora and fauna surveys have been undertaken by Park rangers, biologists, volunteer groups and Sydney University. Further surveys and incorporation of Indigenous ecological knowledge into park management should increase the number of species recorded, their known distribution and improve understanding of their ecological requirements.

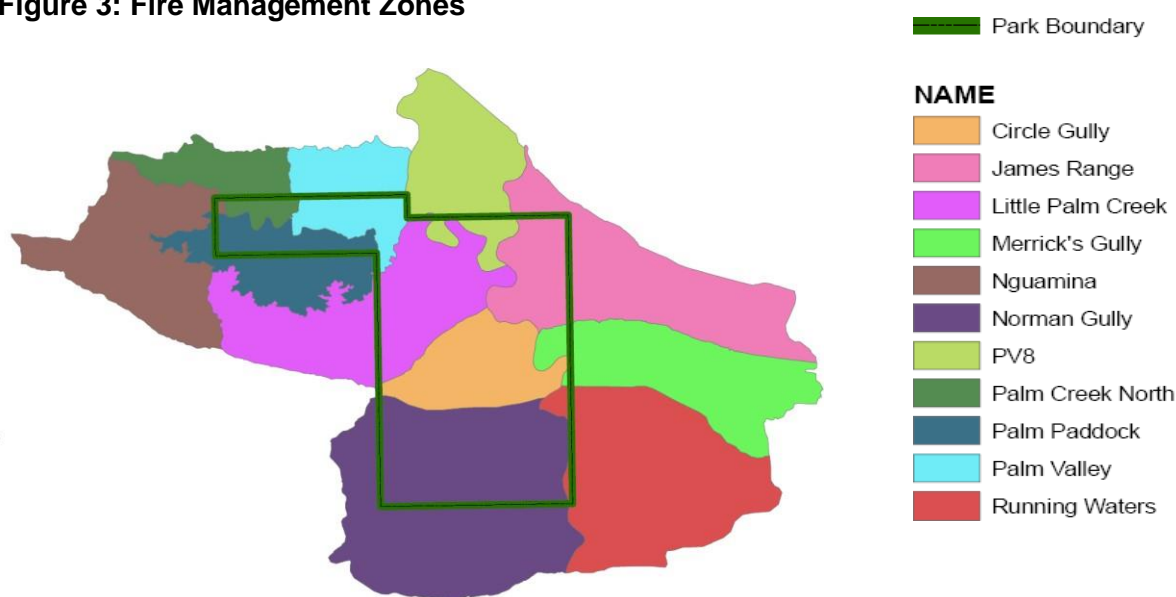
Finke Gorge is a Central Australian park where rangers feel their efforts have made a considerable difference. Visible evidence of successful fire management and feral animal control programs can be attributed to a long history of strategic planning, dedicated park staff and co-operative neighbours. Vigilance and adaptive management are required to ensure threats from wildfires, weeds, feral animals, climate change and human activities continue to be minimised. It is essential that integrated management programs are focussed on maintaining biological diversity and maximising efficient resource use.

### *Fire Management*

Fire is a natural occurrence and has played a major part in shaping the region's vegetation communities. Approximately 300 vegetation units defined throughout the Park in a biophysical mapping project have been simplified into 20 vegetation communities. The Park

has been further divided into ten conservation zones that reflect topographic and ecological boundaries, forming the basis for biodiversity conservation and fire management.

**Figure 3: Fire Management Zones**



A number of long unburnt areas and fire sensitive communities occur in the Park. These are largely associated with rocky ranges, moist gullies and watercourses that provide natural fire breaks (in the absence of introduced grasses). It is important that these areas are protected from increased fuel loads and altered fire regimes that may threaten highly localised species directly, through fire-induced erosion or loss of habitat. Species most at risk include long-lived woody obligate seeders such as callitris and threatened small mammals/reptiles and grass-layer invertebrates (Slater's Skink and Land Snails). Old open mulga woodland may be at risk due to mature trees being sensitive to fire.

An adaptive Fire Management Program for Finke Gorge National Park has been in place since 1997. A five year fire management strategy promotes fire regimes that better reflect the requirements of different vegetation communities. It also provides for the protection of human life and property, research and monitoring and wildfire suppression. It is important for Traditional Owners to be actively engaged in integrating Indigenous ecological knowledge and priorities into fire planning and implementation. Regional fire planning and liaison with adjoining landowners remains a critical part of effective fire management. The partners will liaise with the adjoining Henbury Station regarding fire management and their carbon sequestration conservation project.

*Invasive and Introduced Plant Management*

Thirty four introduced plant species have been recorded in the Park. Most are confined to river banks and flats, spread by floodwaters and vehicles. Buffel Grass and Couch Grass are the highest priority weeds for control as they form dense stands and increase the threat of frequent, intense fires.

Buffel Grass extends well into the range country, whilst Couch Grass is largely confined to waterways and springs, where it threatens the palms at Palm Valley and old River Red Gums. It may also impact the Caldwell's Clubrush, presumed extinct on the Park.

Isolated pockets of Castor-oil Bush and Athel Pine are controlled along the Finke River within the Park. Ongoing commitment to control residual athel pine in the upper reaches of the Finke River within Finke Gorge NP is of significant benefit to the overall success of the program. Early detection and eradication of Spiny Rush at permanent and semi-permanent waterholes is a management priority.

Finke Gorge National Park's weed program focuses on controlling established weed populations in areas of high biodiversity - especially Little Palm Creek - whilst minimising introduction of new weed species. The effectiveness of this program relies in part, on weed control activities, making it necessary to liaise and consult closely with landholders and other stakeholders of all catchments. It is also necessary to educate visitors about reducing the spread of weeds by keeping to the main vehicle tracks.

*Feral Animal Management*

A number of vegetation communities within the Park have been affected by the long history of grazing and trampling by stock, including the Red Cabbage Palm. Some Traditional Owners remember the days when “*there used to be only dust when horses and cattle were at Boggy Hole.*” Vegetation change, coupled with periods of prolonged drought and the introduction of predatory cats and foxes, are thought to be responsible for local extinctions of the Lesser Stick-nest Rat and the nationally vulnerable Thick-billed Grass Wren in the Park.

Removal of 4,000 horses from the Park in 1991 has enabled vegetation and local Black-footed Rock Wallaby populations to recover. A program to increase the population of Red Kangaroos into the Park has been moderately successful, assisted greatly by a rabbit control program that has effectively reduced the number of rabbits, and subsequently, foxes in the Park. Camels and potentially donkeys are a management concern, particularly south and west of the Park.

Effective long-term control of horses, camels and rabbits requires a strategic approach and a commitment of resources. Control methods have included strategic fencing, mustering and removal by pet meat operators under concession agreements, poisoning, shooting and trapping. Traditional Owners are reluctant to endorse broad-scale culling. The partners need to work together to achieve effective and acceptable control methods. Maintaining strategic fencing and an effective buffer to the Park is critical and will require ongoing consultation and liaison with adjoining landowners.

**Natural Values Aims:**

- No decline in species richness and habitat diversity.
- Indigenous knowledge and skills incorporated into management programs through Traditional Owner participation.

**Management Directions:**

**4.9 Indigenous Ecological Knowledge** – Indigenous ecological knowledge will be incorporated into natural resource management through the active involvement of Traditional Owners in planning and implementation activities. Information will be recorded and protected according to ICIP policy and guidelines agreed by the partners (see 4.3).

**4.10 Biodiversity conservation** – Protection of the Park's biodiversity will be one of the highest management priorities.

- Research, survey and monitoring of threatened species and threatening processes will be prioritised by the joint management partners. Traditional Owners will be involved in conservation activities and researchers will be engaged where possible and appropriate. Species distribution and status will be recorded and entered into the Park Geographic Information System (GIS) and Fauna Atlas database.
- Boggy Hole will be the site of a long term waterhole monitoring program to establish base-line data, assess the status of the Finke Goby and study aquatic ecological processes. Recreational net fishing will continue to be prohibited.



- A palm census will continue at five year intervals and simple, repeatable monitoring programs will be developed and implemented for Slater's Skink, Land Snails and Black-footed Rock-wallabies.

**4.11 Fire management** – Protection of life, infrastructure and biodiversity from the effects of wildfire will be a high priority.

- Vegetation mapping and monitoring will be expanded and enhanced to include threatened and fire sensitive species. Fire history and species ecological responses to fire will be recorded and entered into relevant databases.
- Fire management will focus on fire regimes that maintain botanical diversity across the Park and minimise carbon emissions. Fuel reduction burns in fire-tolerant communities will occur during cooler months, or after rain.
- Fuel loads around park infrastructure and cultural sites susceptible to fire will be reduced. A strategic network of burnt linear and natural breaks will be maintained throughout the Park. Breaks will be maintained across weed infested river banks and flats.
- The joint management partners will liaise with Bushfires NT and consult with adjoining landowners for regional fire planning, wildfire suppression and prior to planned burning. Five year fire strategies and annual fire plans will be approved by an expert group. The partners will liaise with the adjoining Henbury Station regarding their carbon sequestration conservation project.
- Parks staff will inform visitors about campfires, firewood collection and enforce seasonal fire restrictions within the Park.

**4.12 Invasive or introduced plant management** – Invasive or introduced plant survey and control will be prioritised in the high biodiversity areas of Little Palm Creek and the springs of Palm Valley.

- New outbreaks of Buffel Grass and Couch Grass will be controlled. Weed distribution and control efforts will be recorded and entered into park GIS database. Only non-residual, biodegradable herbicides will be used to control weeds and maintain fire breaks along creeklines.
- Annual search and control of Spiny Rush, Caster-oil Bush and Athel Pine will be continued along Ellery Creek and the Finke River. Early detection of Annual Beard-grass will be a priority at Kunanan Creek springs. New weed species will be eliminated as soon as possible following detection.
- Public visitation to Little Palm Creek will be restricted. Driving off designated tracks for research, hunting or gathering will be discouraged throughout the Park.
- A collaborative catchment-management approach to weed control across tenures will be promoted.

**4.13 Feral animal management** – Exclusion of stock and feral herbivores will continue to be a management priority.

- Strategic fencing will be maintained. Camels and other large grazing animals will be removed in accordance with Departmental policy and locally developed guidelines. Park staff will work with neighbours to develop a feral animal control area around the Park. The 10 to 15km buffer zone established on Henbury Station will be maintained as far as practicable.
- Feral animal sightings and control efforts will be recorded and entered into park GIS database. Rabbit populations will be monitored and controlled using methods that enable continued use of old Burrowing Bettong burrows by reptiles.

- Park staff will enforce the Pets in Parks policy.

#### 4.14 Water quality

- Water quality at major visitor nodes and waterholes will be monitored as required and checked for pathogens. Swimming may be prohibited in waterholes deemed to be under threat and having significant biological value, as per Departmental policy.
- Use of insect repellents and detergents in the Park's waterholes will be actively discouraged and communicated to visitors through park information and Tourism Central Australia.
- Areas of accelerated soil erosion affecting water quality will be identified and addressed.
- Any development will need to protect the local aquifer.

**4.15 Stakeholder liaison** – The partners will liaise with the local community and relevant stakeholders to ensure a co-ordinated approach to weed, fire and feral animal control across tenures and neighbouring properties (see **2.13**). Weed and fire expert groups will continue to contribute to five-year strategies and endorsement of annual plans.

## 5. Managing For Visitors

Approximately 28,400 visitors each year are drawn to Finke Gorge by its outstanding natural beauty and its remoteness. Centrally located within Australia's Red Centre National Landscape, Finke Gorge National Park offers some of the finest remote four wheel drive and bush camping experiences in Central Australia.

The joint management partners encourage visitors to have a safe, enjoyable and informative experience at Finke Gorge National Park. They would like the following key messages to be communicated to visitors:

- Welcome to this place.
- Please be safe and stay on marked tracks.
- Aboriginal people have been here for a long time.
- This place is very special to us and part of our life.

### Principles for Managing Visitors

- Well designed facilities help protect the Park and promote safe, enjoyable visitor experiences.
- Positive experiences produce satisfied visitors and community support for Park.
- Well managed commercial operations provide opportunities, services and facilities that park management cannot provide.
- Monitoring visitor activities and satisfaction helps decision-making and can identify enterprise opportunities for Traditional Owners.

## 5.1 Recreational and Tourism Values

Since Giles' discovery of the palm trees of Finke Gorge in 1872, an increasing number of visitors have travelled to see what he called the "Glen of Palms." Small groups of scientists, artists and individuals were amongst the first visitors to the area, attracted by the beautiful scenery and unique assemblage of plants.

Early tourism in Central Australia was greatly assisted by Hermannsburg's proximity to the palms and the presence of local Aboriginal people who worked as guides and artefact suppliers. The first paying tourists to Palm Valley travelled from Hermannsburg with "Bonds Tours" in 1933. The current Palm Valley campground is located near the site of their permanent camp, established in the early 1950s.

Improved roads and increasing ownership of reliable four wheel drive vehicles has resulted in a slow increase in the number of visitors to Finke Gorge National Park. Marketing and sealing of the Red Centre Way tourist route between Alice Springs and Uluru is expected to increase the number of visitors travelling through the region. It is important to maintain the remote character of the Park and for the low-key, nature based activities to be enhanced by good information including cultural content and interactive Indigenous experiences.

*Remote bush camping will be complemented by opportunities to learn about the area's rich cultural associations.*



### A Remote Four Wheel Drive Experience

Commercial tour operators and independent travellers access the Park via sandy stretches of the Finke River and Ellery Creek from Hermannsburg. High clearance four wheel drive vehicles are required, as road conditions are variable and subject to severe flooding.

The four wheel drive experience at Finke Gorge National Park is highly valued by visitors seeking adventure and solitude. The challenging Finke River Four Wheel Drive Route between Hermannsburg and Illamurta Springs requires careful planning and is for experienced four wheel drivers only. Self-reliant bush camping is allowed adjacent to the Finke River Four Wheel Drive Route, south of the Junction.

Boggy Hole waterhole is a highlight of the route and continues to grow in popularity as a bush campsite. Low rainfall years and busy visitor periods often result in congestion and degradation of the site. The partners are concerned about the integrity of the site and litter left by locals and careless campers.

An opportunity exists to expand the network of four wheel drive tracks in the Park and link these to the Red Centre Way tourist route. Outback four wheel drive touring features prominently in domestic media and is increasing in awareness and popularity. An enhanced experience would be a highly marketable four wheel drive product for both the domestic and international markets.

#### *Safety*

The remoteness of the area highlights the importance of prior planning and visitors being well-equipped to access the Park's four wheel drive tracks safely. Visitors can access pre-visit information through web-based materials and by contacting the Parks and Wildlife Service

regional office. Park specific orientation and awareness is promoted through Park Fact Sheets published by the Parks and Wildlife Service and provided on Park signage.

The main safety concerns in the Park include visitors dehydrating whilst walking or severely bogging their vehicle along the remote Finke River Four Wheel Drive route. This is particularly serious during long, hot summers when Park visitation is low.

Risk reduction measures include visitor education, facility maintenance and implementing management practices that remove or reduce potential harm. Rangers are trained in emergency response and advanced first aid and regularly patrol the main visitor areas to monitor facilities and visitor behaviour. They maintain facilities to the highest practicable standards for visitor safety. Safety information signs are located at visitor information shelters and trail heads on four wheel drive routes. Visitors are encouraged to have radio contact or carry a satellite telephone and an emergency personal locator beacon.

Rangers are supported in their management of visitor safety through: an Emergency Response Plan (reviewed annually with relevant stakeholders); police stationed at Hermannsburg and tour operators and school groups working within the conditions of their permits when visiting the Park.

## **The Palm Valley Experience**

The Park provides excellent opportunities for nature-based activities including camping, picnicking, bushwalking, bird watching and sightseeing. The majority of these are focussed around the Palm Valley and Amphitheatre areas of the Park.

A variety of walks enable visitors to explore captivating nature, wonder at spectacular geology and learn about the area's cultural significance. The popular Arankaia walk and longer Mpulungkinya track at Palm Valley allow visitors to discover the unique palms. The majestic Kalarranga lookout and the longer Mpaara track at the Amphitheatre introduce visitors to the fascinating landforms and their significance to Arrernte culture.

The exposed, rocky nature of these walks requires visitors to be aware of their personal fitness and safety. Management aims to protect visitors and fragile palm seedlings through signage, education and improved track definition.

Special access permission is required for some activities including: overnight hiking, functions, landing aircraft, research and commercial activities. An opportunity exists for guided remote walking through the Park from neighbouring Aboriginal Land Trusts and to open sections of the Park to organised walks, subject to interest within the industry. Scenic flights and heli-touring are a potential growth area of regional tourism.

High-risk activities such as rock climbing and abseiling are neither promoted nor permitted.

### *Infrastructure*

The joint management partners want visitors to have a safe and enjoyable experience. Visitor surveys assist in understanding visitor needs and expectations. It is important that infrastructure, facilities and services reflect the character of the Park and visitor expectations.

The Palm Valley campground has recently been upgraded to cater for the ten percent of visitors who stay overnight. Camper-trailers are increasingly popular. A camping fee is applicable for use of facilities that include hot showers, flushing toilets, wood and gas fired barbecues. Firewood must be collected from outside the Park. A separate picnic area is provided for day use. Information shelters containing directional, safety and interpretation information are located at these facilities and at key sites throughout the Park.

A business opportunity exists to manage the campground and the picnic area and for the repair and maintenance of facilities to be contracted out. Traditional Owners have expressed interest in this type of work and in developing the old ranger station into tea rooms and an art centre. An opportunity also exists for high quality, eco-lodge style accommodation to be developed within the Park.

## Enriching Experiences

An increasing number of visitors to Australia's Red Centre are looking for enriching, transformative experiences. The unique Finke Gorge – Palm Valley experience can be enhanced by appropriate tourism development to include interaction with Aboriginal people and opportunities to contribute to responsible tourism.

Traditional Owners living close to the Park provide a foundation for developing the local tourism industry and are reviving their stake in this. They are working with the Central Land Council, Tourism NT, sectors of the tourism industry and other NT government agencies to develop local products and businesses along the Red Centre Way tourist route.

The park volunteer program could be expanded into a niche market for paying holiday-makers. Cross-cultural conservation projects that enable visitors to connect with nature and engage with Aboriginal people could foster tremendous support for joint management.

### *Information and Interpretation*

Providing accurate and appropriate information to visitors is important for fostering appreciation and enjoyment of the Park. Information transfer may be enhanced through the innovative use of communication technologies and the development of interactive activities. Park information programs delivered by rangers should support cultural tourism and cross-cultural activities.

Communication between Tour Operators, the tourism industry and the joint management partners is important to ensure safe and enjoyable experiences for visitors. Tourism NT Desert Guides information nights are aimed at increasing the knowledge base of Central Australian tour guides through contact with protected area managers.

It will continue to be important for the joint management partners to work closely with Tourism NT, the wider tourism industry and other relevant agencies to ensure key stakeholders are informed and have the opportunity to contribute to management and development planning.

### **Managing Visitors Aims:**

- Provision of safe, enjoyable and interactive experiences centred on the Park's natural and cultural values.
- Successful, sustainable local industry associated with the Park.

### **Management Directions:**

**5.1 Scenery** – The Park's natural character and aesthetic values will be protected by ensuring developments are designed and located to be sympathetic to the surrounding landscape.

**5.2 Access** – The Park or areas within it may be temporarily closed to the public for flood, fire, feral animal culls and important Aboriginal ceremonies. Any park closures will be advertised publicly and involve communication with the tourism industry.

- Entry of pets will be consistent with the TPWC By-laws and existing Parks and Wildlife policy (see 4.13).

**5.3 Activities** – The joint management partners will ensure walking tracks, day use areas, campground facilities and interpretive signage are maintained to a high standard.

- Self-reliant bush camping will be promoted along the Finke River Four Wheel Drive Route, south of the Junction. Alternatives to camping at Boggy Hole will be investigated.
- Swimming and line-fishing is allowed at Boggy Hole and major waterholes. Water quality at visitor nodes will be monitored as required.

- Walkers wanting to camp overnight in remote areas of the Park require a permit.
- Guidelines will be developed for aircraft operation in the Park, if required.

**5.4 Existing facilities and future developments** – The Joint Management Committee will annually endorse rolling five year forward works plans and site development plans with stakeholders, guided by the Territory Parks Tourism Plan. Visitor surveys and market information provided by Tourism NT will continue to inform development planning.

- Walking tracks through Palm Valley will be well defined and the public educated about potential impacts of trampling and erosion on palm seedling survival. The partners will work with the tourism industry to develop guided walks in remote areas of the Park.
- Management and maintenance of the Palm Valley campground and picnic area will be outsourced when local capacity is developed.
- The Palm Valley campground may be expanded providing no additional pressure is placed on local aquifers. Alternative camping facilities outside the Park will be promoted to support local businesses.
- A network of four wheel drive tracks linked to the Red Centre Way will be considered by the Joint Management Committee and affected Traditional Owners and will be subject to appropriate clearances and expert soil conservation advice.

**5.5 Community education and interpretation** – The partners will develop an Interpretation Plan for the Park. Both partners will be involved in planning, prioritising and delivering park information and Junior Ranger programs where possible.

- Visitor information will be reviewed for accuracy and appropriateness. Aboriginal people, place names and language will be represented where appropriate, in conjunction with biological and geological information. Information will include use of innovative technology where possible.
- Traditional Owners will ensure that all Aboriginal cultural information shared with visitors is accurate and appropriate.

**5.6 Visitor safety** – The Emergency Response Plan will be reviewed annually. Identified risks will be rectified on a priority basis and rangers will receive appropriate training.

- The Park's facilities and visitor management practices will be subject to ongoing monitoring, maintenance and risk assessment.
- Safety and directional signage will be improved and standardised along the Finke River and Ellery Creek public access corridors. Visitors will be encouraged to have radio contact or carry a satellite telephone or personal locator beacon.
- The partners will maintain good collaboration and co-operation between government and stakeholders. Tour operators will be encouraged to report incidents and safety issues (physical and behavioural) to park management.

**5.7 Tourism** – The joint management partners will support Aboriginal involvement in the delivery of Park visitor programs and in regional tourism associated with the Park.

- The joint management partners will work with Tourism NT, the wider tourism industry and other relevant agencies to ensure the Park is marketed and promoted accurately and appropriately, consistent with the values and character of the Park.
- The Joint Management Committee will nominate Traditional Owners to deliver "introduction to Aboriginal culture" sessions to Finke Gorge rangers.

- The partners will work with the tourism industry, the Central Land Council and local operators to foster Aboriginal employment in tourism and assist the development of local Indigenous tourism enterprises including cross-cultural voluntourism opportunities.

## Appendix 1 Threatened Species List

Common Name	Scientific Name	Conservation Status
Australian Bustard	<i>Ardeotis australis</i>	Vulnerable (NT)
Australian Painted Snipe	<i>Rostratula australis</i>	Vulnerable
Black-footed Rock-wallaby	<i>Petrogale lateralis</i>	Vulnerable
Caldwells Clubrush	<i>Bolboschoenus caldwellii</i>	Endangered (NT)
Common Brush-tailed Possum	<i>Trichosurus vulpecula vulpecula</i>	Endangered (NT)
Emu	<i>Dromaius novaehollandiae</i>	Vulnerable (NT)
Finke Goby	<i>Chlamydogobius japalpa</i>	Vulnerable
Land Snail	<i>Bothriembryon spenceri</i>	Vulnerable (NT)
Land Snail	<i>Basedowena squamulosa</i>	Vulnerable (NT) – endemic to the Park, only reservation of this species
Land Snail	<i>Divellomellon hillieri</i>	Vulnerable (NT) – only reservation of this species
Land Snail	<i>Semotrachia elleryi</i>	Vulnerable (NT)
Land Snail	<i>Semotrachia esau</i>	Vulnerable (NT) – only reservation of this species
MacDonnell Ranges Cycad	<i>Macrozamia macdonnellii</i>	Vulnerable – downgraded in NT
Minnie Daisy	<i>Minuria tridens</i>	Vulnerable
Palm Valley Myrtle	<i>Thrytomene hexandra</i>	Vulnerable (NT)
Red Cabbage Palm	<i>Livistona mariae</i> subsp. <i>mariae</i>	Vulnerable – only reservation of this species
Slater's Skink	<i>Lyoppholis slateri</i>	Endangered



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# Giwining / Flora River Nature Park

## Joint Management Plan June 2011



Giwining / Flora River Nature Park Joint Management Plan  
Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory,  
Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport  
PO Box 344,  
KATHERINE, NT, 0851

This document is available at [www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks/manage/plans/katherine.html](http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks/manage/plans/katherine.html)

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## **Acknowledgements**

This Plan is the result of extensive consultation between the Traditional Owners of Giwining / Flora River Nature Park and Parks and Wildlife Service Rangers, Planning and Joint Management staff. Northern Land Council (NLC) staff assisted the joint management partners and provided valued input into the Plan's preparation.

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## A Message from the Traditional Owners

We, the Traditional Owners of Flora River, know this place as Giwining.

We have come to be together with Parks and Wildlife Service for the joint management of this place. We have been working to manage this place with Parks and Wildlife Service for a long time and have a good relationship. We have set up a committee to talk about joint management, so all of us can speak together for the Park, agree how to run it and make rules. We want visitors to be safe and enjoy the Park and to understand and respect our culture.

*"We made this Plan all together."*

**Yibulyawan and Wunggayajawun**

**Giwining**



*The next generation of Traditional Owners learn about wildlife surveying from Park Rangers.*

## Vision for the Park

*“Joint management means making a plan, making decisions together, and managing the Park together”*

The Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory and the Wardaman Traditional Owners of the Flora River area will work closely together in a spirit of cooperation and respect so that the partnership benefits and grows. The joint management partners will work together to:

- Exchange knowledge and skills to look after this country and culture
- Manage the Park so that Wardaman culture is always respected
- Provide a safe place for visitors to enjoy
- Help visitors understand and protect the cultural, natural and historical values of the Park
- Teach and share knowledge and culture for generations to come
- Provide opportunities for Traditional Owners to gain social and economic benefit from the Park

*The Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service*

## Vision Statement in Wardaman

Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory ngarrug-mulu Traditional Owner ngadjingiyan-mulu dan-gu laglan Giwining. Ngadjingiwe-mulu mijamet partner-warang:

- Madin-gu ngorlogba Traditional Owner dan-mulu madin-mulu yawudjingingan yibam-warang ngorlogba ngadjingiwe dan-gu laglan.
- Danani Park ngarrugu ngadjingiwe-mulu yanima madin-gu ngarrugu marluluga mulurru-mulu Wardaman-wunba.
- Danani laglan yilgbayi yajingin wuman laglan wurrugu tourist-mulu wayi yawudjangayan ledba-wu.
- Ngadjingiyan-mulu ngorlogba-warra madin ngarrgiyan tourism-gu yilama-gan. Ngarrugu yawudjingingan ngorlogba dan-gu laglan-gu Giwining-gu.
- Mijamet-mulu ngadjingiyan mernden yibiyan ngorlogba ngadjingiyan-mulu wurren-mulu dan gu laglan ledba yawudjingingan wurrugu.
- Traditional Owner-mulu yawurrdagbarlayan yilama-gan danani training yawudjingingan ngorlogba yiwarna-gari-mulu yawurrgayan-mulu laglaya warrba yawudjingingan dan-gu laglan-gu Giwining-gu.

Wardaman-mulu Parks and Wildlife Service yawudjingingan ledba danani laglan yilama-gan mijamet ngarrgiyan ngarrugu nungguru in respect yanima partnership wuman laglan ngarmarnbuyan mijamet ngadjingiyan ledba yajingingan yijad.

*(Source: Jessie Brown and Colleen McQuay, Diwurruwurru-jaru Aboriginal Corporation, 2007).*

## How this Plan was Developed

This is the second management plan and the first Joint Management Plan to be prepared for Giwining / Flora River Nature Park under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. This Plan was prepared by the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) and the Wardaman Aboriginal Traditional Owner's for the Park, with assistance from the Northern Land Council (NLC) as well as input from the broader community.

Planning for formal joint management of the Park began with a series of meetings between Traditional Owners, PWS staff and NLC staff in 2005. Traditional Owners and Park staff have discussed how to work together to manage the Park at Giwining Joint Management Committee meetings and on country camps over the past five years. In 2010, a draft of this Plan was reviewed and approved by the partners before being released for public comment. This plan is the culmination of many hours of hard work and negotiation by the partners to establish an effective and appropriate way to look after this Park.



*Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife Service staff and Northern Land Council staff meet to work on the Draft Plan (2005).*



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## Introduction

Giwining / Flora River Nature Park is located 122 kilometres by road south-west of Katherine. With an area of 7 824 hectares, the Park is long and narrow; not more than four kilometres wide at any point. The Park's main feature is a 25 kilometre section of the Flora River, its levee banks and associated native vegetation, including attractive riparian forest and palm stands. The Flora River is a perennial watercourse fed from numerous springs, some of which are hot springs. It rises near the headwaters of the Fitzmaurice and Fish Rivers and then flows northeast through grassy plains and open woodland to the Katherine River, which it joins to form the Daly River.

Access to the Park is via the Victoria Highway and the 36 kilometre Giwining (Flora) Road. Aroona and Scott Creek Stations border the Park on the west and east respectively. Wardaman Aboriginal land, owned by the Yubulyawun Aboriginal Land Trust and Djarrung Aboriginal Corporation, borders the Park on the north and southwest (Map 1, page 3).

Joint management brings a new perspective on caring for the Park. While Traditional Owners appreciate the natural beauty of the Park's landscape, their connection with it differs from that of non-Aboriginal people. For Traditional Owners, culture, land, water and wildlife are all connected. To them, this landscape is the result of the actions of ancestral beings (Buwarraja) during creation times. The landscape is infused with the presence of the Dreamings, and so must be respected and cared for, and celebrated as part of a living culture.

*Note: Italicised statements throughout this Plan are quotes from Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Service staff made during the preparation of this Plan.*

## Key Values and Purpose

The Park protects 25 kilometres of the highly-scenic Flora River, and a small section of adjacent land.

### Natural Values

The Flora River is the Park's main conservation asset, a significant and representative example of a tropical riverine environment conserved within the Territory parks system. The river corridor and islands in the river support near pristine tropical riparian forest.

Limestone underlies the Park and the Flora River. Tufa formations are created where the river flows over numerous waterfalls and cascades, the result of precipitation of calcium carbonate from the spring waters. The tufa formations are fossil-rich and contain gastropod (snail) and lamellibranch (mollusc) remains of scientific interest.

This is one of the few Parks in Australia where the Pig-nosed Turtle (*Carettochelys insculpta*), which is an unusual, large freshwater turtle whose Australian stronghold is within the Daly River System, is conserved. Significant species recorded include Freshwater Sawfish (*Pristis microdon*) and Merten's Water Monitor (*Varanus mertensi*), with the vulnerable Purple-crowned Fairy-wren (*Malurus coronatus coronatus*), sighted once but not recorded recently. The herb *Polygala wightiana* is endemic to the Park.

### Cultural Values

The Wardaman People who are the Traditional Owners of the Park know the river as Giwining. They have a rich cultural heritage and a long and continuing association with the

Flora River area. There are many sites of significance to the Wardaman People within the Park, some of which are registered under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*. There are also archaeological sites in the Park, protected under the *Northern Territory Heritage Conservation Act*.

Stories and traditions, sacred sites and related Dreamings represent significant cultural values. Traditional Owners' connection with land and water involves a complex set of traditional rights, benefits, obligations and responsibilities. Some of these traditions can be shared publicly and provide insight into the connections between the land and its people. This knowledge is intrinsically valuable and includes knowledge of plants and animals and land management.

## **Visitor Values**

The Flora River is highly scenic with braided channels, deep pools, intriguing tufa formations and dense riparian vegetation. Opportunities for bushwalks, boating, fishing and photography are in a largely natural environment. Part of the Park's appeal is the opportunity to camp in a remote and quiet setting with few other visitors. Cultural tourism is an undeveloped opportunity for Traditional Owners.

## **Purpose of the Park**

Giwining / Flora River Nature Park will be managed to retain its natural character and maintain its heritage and resources. The Park will provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy the landscape and wildlife and at the same time learn about its cultural and natural heritage. Wardaman knowledge and values will be protected and integrated into management of the Park.

## **Objectives of the Plan**

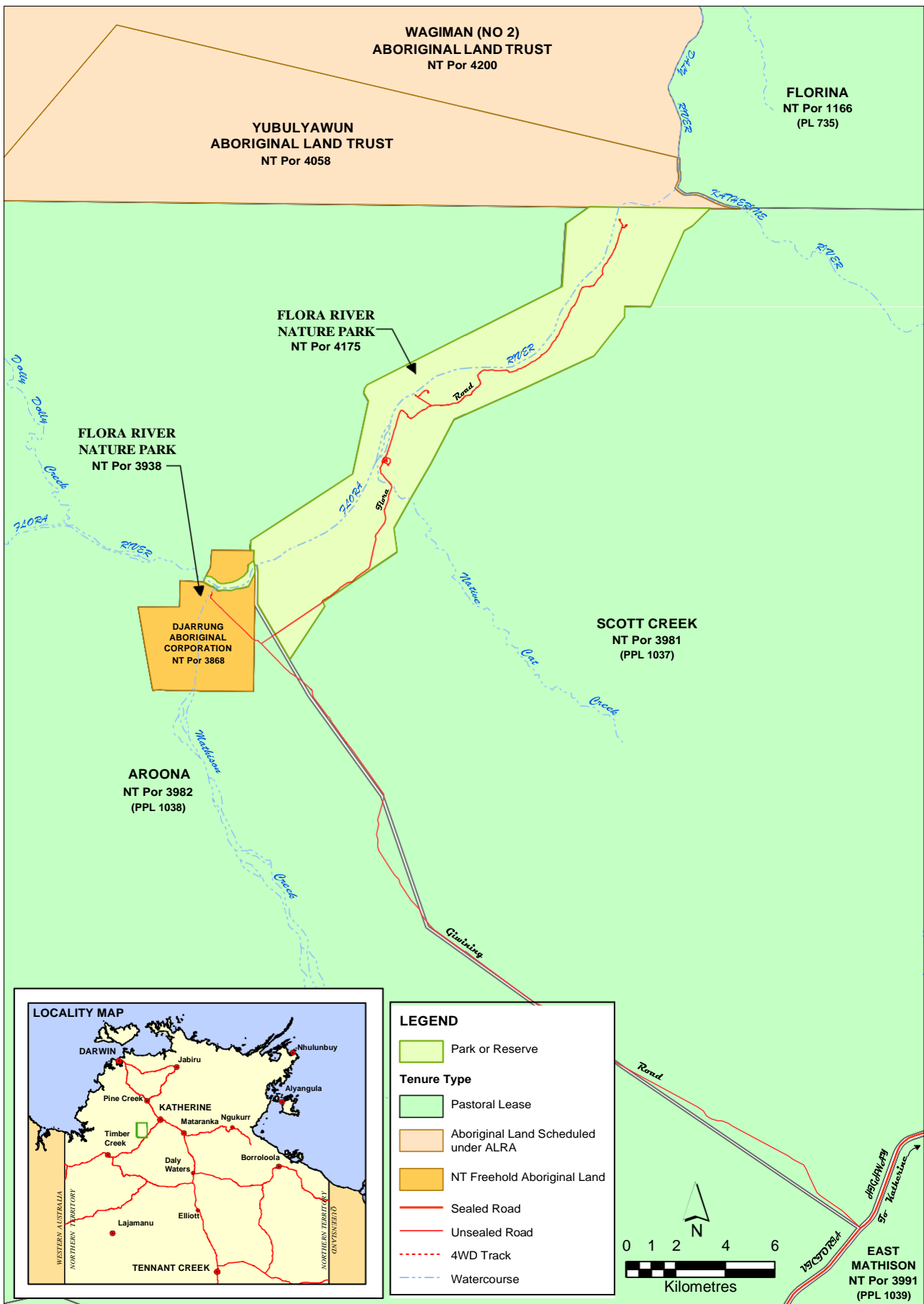
This Plan has been written for the joint management partners, to guide and support them in joint management. It is also a public document by which the public may learn about the Park, its values and management.

This Plan explains how the joint management partners will work together to look after the Park. It provides direction for operational planning and day-to-day programs. It provides for the ongoing conservation of the Park's significant natural and cultural values and continued public use and enjoyment. It shows how public interests in the Park will be best served while recognising that the Park belongs to and is of deep cultural and spiritual significance to the Traditional Owners.

This Plan sets management objectives and performance measures against which the PWS, Traditional Owners and the general public may measure progress. The Plan presents both general and specific management directions and performance measures with respect to the Park's purpose and current management issues. It also outlines measures that will ensure that future development of the Park is appropriate.

This Joint Management Plan replaces the 1998 Plan of Management and is effective until replaced by a new plan, preferably within ten years.

**Map 1. Park Location and Neighbouring Tenure**



## Joint Management Partners

Joint management is about the Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service working together in partnership to manage the Park. It is about the partners sharing their knowledge, values and interests, and considering the values and interests of the wider community, to jointly make decisions in relation to all aspects of the Park's management.

The land comprising Giwining / Flora River Nature Park is held by two Aboriginal Land Trusts on behalf of Traditional Owners under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. The land has been leased back to the Northern Territory for 99 years. This Joint Management Plan has force in law under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. It must also comply with a lease and Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) registered under the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*.

*“We have a good relationship with Parks and Wildlife Service, passing information and sharing stories, it's been good so far, all the way”*

## Traditional Owners

Giwining / Flora River Nature Park lies within the traditional lands of the Wardaman People of the Victoria River district. Wardaman People to this day see themselves as linked to and holding their lands through principles established in the Dreaming (creation period) during which the Burwarraja Dreaming beings formed the landscape (including Giwining / Flora River) through their exploits, and laid down the rules by which people were henceforth to live.

Individual Dreamings were responsible for the creation and naming of particular topographical features and vegetation, and for the ritual knowledge, ceremonial practices and rules of behaviour associated with them. After their heroic deeds, the Dreamings became the people, the plants and the animals of Wardaman country.

*“When Buwarraja were all human before, they made everything and passed everything to each generation. That went right through to us – from that lot – they are the Creator”*

From these Dreamings, each Wardaman clan inherited its own particular country, which is eternally infused with the presence of their own Dreamings as well as others that may have travelled through or visited their country. The Park includes parts of the countries of two clans, Yubulyawun, whose country extends west from the Flora River onto Innesvale Station and into east Judbarra / Gregory National Park, and Wunggayajawun, whose country extends south and east from the river.

Important Yubulyawun Dreamings include Eaglehawk (Bulyan), Grasshopper (Lidi), Rainbow (Golondolmi), Barramundi and Cheeky Yam (Garnmarnmali). Wunggayajawun Dreamings include Bar Shouldered Pigeon (Gojuk Gojuk) and Left-Hand Kangaroo / Nail Tail Wallaby (Marbirling).

Imprints of the Buwarraja include their 'mark' or 'shadow' on the landscape at identified sites; their presence in rock art; their visibility as specific plants and animals; and in the repertoire of art, song, ceremony and symbols left for their human descendants to celebrate the Buwarraja and their continuing presence and significance.

The Buwarraja also instituted the fabric of social and ceremonial life – the Law – for Wardaman People and for the groups around them with whom they share Law. Wardaman People inherited their Law through their ancestors from the Dreaming creation period. They have the responsibility to pass it on through their descendants.

The Law not only sets out the rules for the right ordering of relations amongst people, but also for the proper use and care of Wardaman country and its resources. Wardaman People

have responsibility under their Law to care for their country and sites as a whole.

*“The Dreaming made the Law”*

This principle allows for people’s rightful use of country and its resources, but prohibits wanton misuse. Wardaman People collectively want to ensure that lands in the Park are respected and cared for. Particular responsibility however is held by those Wardaman People associated with the Yubulyawun and Wunggayajawun clans whose traditional countries encompass the Park.

Originally, for Wardaman People, as for their neighbours across other parts of the Victoria River district, the core group holding a particular country under Law was the clan, whose members traced their connections through their father and his father, ultimately back to the Dreamings associated with that country.

*“Don’t break up anything for nothing – it’s a Dreaming”*

Settlement of the region by non-Aboriginal people has led to many changes for Wardaman People, including the structures of Wardaman land-holding groups. Today, those associated with the countries of each of the original clans are drawn from a number of particular Wardaman families, and while some senior members of these families continue to trace their connections to country and their Wardaman identity through their father, others do so through their mother, mother’s father, and/or father’s mother. Links to country through father and through mother continue however to be particularly important for Wardaman today as they were in the past.

Creation stories (given in the Cultural Values section), further demonstrate Wardaman living culture and the Aboriginal connections with Giwining / Flora River.

## **Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS)**

The PWS is a Division of the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport. The Service is dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural values of 87 parks and reserves in the Northern Territory. Giwining / Flora River Nature Park is managed by PWS as part of the Victoria River – Nitmiluk Region. Currently there are two permanent full-time Park Rangers and two permanent part-time Indigenous Park Rangers, based in the PWS office in Katherine, managing this Park along with two other reserves within the Region.

The PWS has involved Wardaman Traditional Owners in the management of this Park from its earliest days, and the relationship between the partners has developed over this time. The new joint management arrangements formalise the partnership, and guarantee stronger involvement by Traditional Owners. The PWS is committed to seeing that the joint management partnership grows and becomes truly equitable, and that Traditional Owners benefit culturally, socially and economically from joint management.

*“Because we [Parks & Wildlife] have a good relationship with a lot of Traditional Owners, it’s made our job easier. Although there’s still a lot to learn on both sides, we’re quite confident we’re going to get there”*



## Zoning

As the Park is managed for multiple purposes, different areas of the Park will be managed differently. The zoning scheme summarises the management purposes and focus for the Park based on the specific values of each area and their level of visitor access and infrastructure development.

### **Aim**

- Protect the Park's values whilst providing for public use.

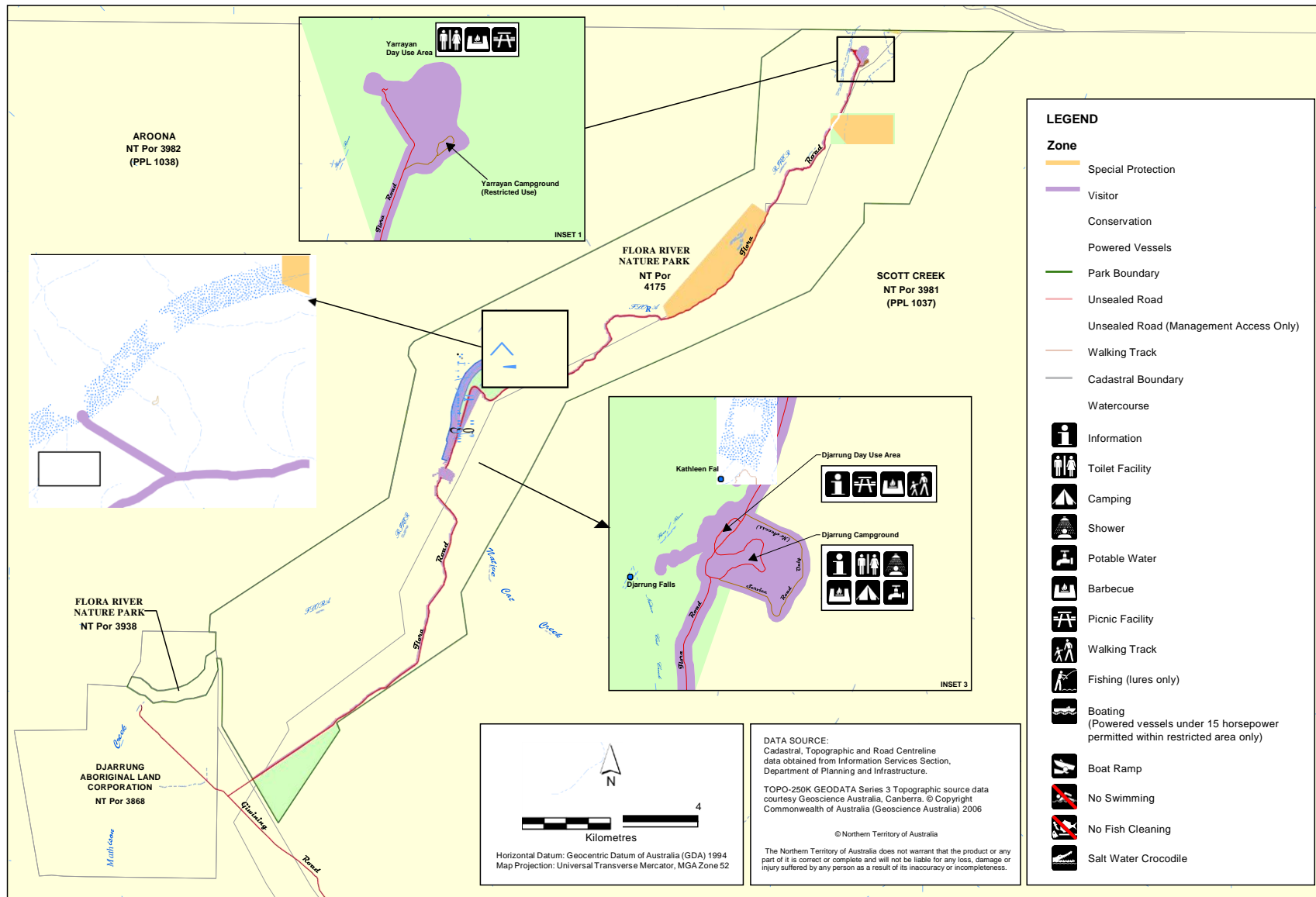
### **Management Directions**

**1.** Conform to the zoning scheme in managing the Park (Table 3, Map 3). Development in any zone is subject to normal approval processes to ensure appropriate protection of cultural and environmental values. Special activities are always subject to normal by-laws and permits.

**Table 1.** Zoning Scheme Summary for Giwining / Flora River Nature Park.

	<b>Visitor Zone</b>	<b>Conservation Zone</b>	<b>Special Protection Zone</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Allow for concentrated visitor use while minimising negative environmental impacts. Provision for possible future development.	Manage for the protection of natural and cultural values while still allowing for personal nature/culturally based experiences.	Protect areas of exceptional conservation or cultural significance.
<b>Management Focus</b>	Maintenance and presentation of visitor facilities, information, interpretation and visitor safety.	Land conservation programs; fire, weed and feral animal management. Maintenance of management facilities and services.	Areas are subject to special attention with regards to conservation and cultural heritage management programs.
<b>Access</b>	Conventional vehicle access to camping areas, canoe / boat launching facility and Yarrayan Day Use Area only. Constructed walking tracks to day use areas. Access to river by foot along defined tracks. Access by powered vessels within visitor zone only (see Map 3). Canoe launching and canoeing with approved concession only. Management access, as approved by GJMC.	Access by canoe with approved concession. Access on land by walkers only or on designated vehicle tracks. Management access, as approved by GJMC.	Access by canoe with approved concession. Canoes must pass to the west and northwest of islands and must not stop in these areas. Management access for specifically approved programs (GJMC) only.
<b>Activities</b>	Camping, picnicking / barbequing, short walks, photography, boating, fishing with supporting infrastructure. Management and commercial tourism with approval from GJMC. Canoeing with approved concession.	Low level personal exploration with no supporting infrastructure. Management and commercial activities with approval from GJMC. Canoeing with approved concession.	Management and commercial activities with approval from GJMC. Canoeing with approved concession as per specific access requirements.
<b>Facilities</b>	Parking, picnic, barbeque and camping facilities, toilets, vessel launching facilities, canoe portage facilities to protect tufa formations. Potable water. Shade shelters, visitor information and interpretive walks.	Allow specially approved visitor facilities subject to demonstrated Traditional Owner and public benefit. Management facilities necessary to protect key values.	Allow only those management facilities necessary to protect key values.

Map 2. Park Zones and Facilities



## Natural Values

The Park is located in the Daly Basin bioregion and its habitats include dense stands of pandanus and palm fringing the major waterholes, patches of riparian monsoon forest on river islands and banks, and a variety of tropical savannah eucalypt woodlands on floodplains with heavy clay soil and higher ground with more well-drained earths.

In the context of the Northern Territory reserve system, the Park's values are mainly regionally significant. The Park's relatively small area, its shape (large boundary in comparison to its area) and surrounding land-use mean that the biodiversity values of the Park are vulnerable to impacts over time. Opportunities to enhance the Park's conservation viability by expanding the Park, or entering into conservation agreements with surrounding land holders, should be pursued.

## Geological Features

The Park's main conservation asset is the Flora River itself, a significant and representative example of a tropical riverine environment conserved within the Territory parks system. The natural springs that feed the Flora River help maintain a high flow rate, even during the dry season (between 250 to 350 million litres / day). The springs contain high concentrations of calcium bicarbonate that is absorbed when water passes through the limestone that underlies the Park and surrounding areas. When the flow of mineral-rich water is interrupted, for example by plant debris or rock bars, carbon dioxide is lost from the calcium bicarbonate, and calcium carbonate is precipitated onto the obstruction. In time this becomes the tufa that forms the picturesque dams and cascades for which the river is known. Kathleen Falls is a tufa dam that spans the breadth of the river. The tufa formations are fossil-rich and contain gastropod (snail) and lamellibranch (mollusc) remains of scientific interest. Human activities can damage the tufa. Portages have been installed in some sections of the river to protect the tufa formations from damage by dragging canoes.



*The Flora River.*

## Riparian Forest

The areas of riparian closed forest occurring on the islands and banks of the Flora River are one of the Park's most significant natural values, and are one of the best and most accessible examples of this habitat in the NT reserve system. The riparian forest is species-rich and includes many plants found in tropical closed forests, such as *Nauclea orientalis* (Leichardt Pine - Jamagarra), extensive stands of the distinctive palm *Livistona mariae* ssp. *rigida* (Palm - Garnbany), *Casuarina cunninghamiana* (River Casuarina - Lalmarrin) and *Melaleuca* spp. The water's edge is commonly fringed by *Pandanus aquaticus* (River Pandanus – Bondoyorrion), the Fresh water Mangrove, *Barringtonia acutangula* (Freshwater Mangrove – Menyjeng) and *Terminalia erythrocarpa* (Manman). The forest areas are also particularly vulnerable to damage by feral animals, fire and irresponsible visitor behaviour (such as driving off-road to gain close vehicle access to the river). Visitor access to, and activities within forest areas, are tightly controlled and monitored.

## Savanna Woodlands

Savanna woodland and open woodland broadly typical of Top End environments forms about 85 percent of the Park. The savanna is typified by grassland with an overstorey of relatively widely-spaced large trees, and sometimes with a midstorey of smaller trees and shrubs of varying density and composition. Common overstorey trees of the woodland are *Eucalyptus tectifica* (Hill Coolibah – Yarrayany), *Corymbia foelscheana* (Bloodwood – Dolyan), *E. microtheca* (Coolibah - Yarrayany), *C. bella* (Ghost Gum - Belerren), *Corymbia grandiflora* (Bloodwood - Golordordorn), *Terminalia* spp., and *Erythrophleum chlorostachys* (Ironwood - Yarlan). Other species of interest include *Bauhinia cunninghamii* (Bauhinia - Windinyin), *Petalostigma* spp. and *Vachellia valida* (Wattle – Gorlmedin). Grasses include annual *Sorghum* spp. and a variety of perennials including *Themeda triandra*, *Chrysopogon fallax*, *Sehima nervosum* and *Heteropogon contortus* with *Plectrachne* spp. (spinifex) occasionally occurring on the peaks of low hills. Dead trees litter the woodland, providing valuable animal habitat. Flora River is currently the only known location in the Northern Territory of a small herb, *Goodenia durackiana*, which is listed as Data Deficient under the *TPWC Act*.

## Wildlife

The wildlife associated with the river is of significant conservation and recreation value, with visitor experience strongly enhanced by wildlife that live in, or use the river. A total of 277 native plant species and 194 native vertebrate (including fish) species have been recorded from the Park to date. Flora and fauna monitoring sites were established in the Park in 2008, with the joint management partners conducting initial surveys.

The Freshwater Sawfish (*Pristis microdon*) (vulnerable) is one of 27 fish species recorded from the Flora River by researchers from Charles Darwin University with the help of Traditional Owners. Traditional knowledge of the fish and their habitats has been recorded and this information is available to Park managers. Other aquatic species include Barramundi (*Lates calcarifer*), catfish, bream, grunters, crustaceans (including the Freshwater Yabby (*Cherax quadricarinatus*) and the Giant Freshwater Prawn (*Machrobrachium rosenbergii*) and the Freshwater Mussel (*Velesunio* spp.).

At least 11 frog species have been recorded in the Park, including a number of tree frogs and the Giant Frog (*Litoria australis*).

There are 32 reptile species recorded from the Park, and some of these are of particular conservation value. The Pig-nosed Turtle (*Carettochelys insculpta*) is of scientific interest as



the sole surviving member of the family Carettochelydidae. This species is known from four Territory river systems, with its stronghold in the Daly River catchment. The size of the local Flora River Pig-nosed Turtle population is estimated from an annual survey of turtle numbers in selected waterholes. Traditional Owners acknowledge the conservation significance of the Pig-nosed Turtle (Jurrul) and want to be involved in projects monitoring and protecting this species.



*A Pig-nosed Turtle captured during the annual survey.*

Merten's Water Monitor (*Varanus mertensi*; vulnerable) inhabits the river's edge. This once common species has declined considerably following the invasion of the Cane Toad into Top End environments, as the monitor preys on this toad species.

Both Saltwater (*Crocodylus porosus*) and Freshwater (*Crocodylus johnstoni*) Crocodiles inhabit the river. Saltwater Crocodiles are dangerous to people and are managed as per the Katherine River Saltwater Crocodile Management Strategy and the Estuarine Crocodile Management for Visitor Safety: Plan for Flora River Nature Park.

A total of 107 bird species have so far been recorded in the Park, including Shining Flycatcher (*Myiagra alecto*), White-browed Robin (*Poecilodryas superciliosa*) and Green-backed Gerygone (*Gerygone chloronotus*), as well as Darter (*Arhinga melanogaster*), cormorants and herons. The Australian Bustard (*Ardeotis australis*; vulnerable) is of conservation significance but has limited habitat within the Park. Although its presence in the Park has not been recently confirmed, the Purple-crowned Fairy Wren (*Malurus coronatus coronatus*; vulnerable) has been recorded here. There was a single reliable report for this species near the boat ramp, but the cane-grass stands were badly damaged by severe flooding in 2007 and the species was not located during intensive searches in 2008. Their presence will be monitored as part of a regional conservation project aiming for the long-term survival of this wren in the Victoria River District. Known major threats to survival include loss of river grass habitat and predation by Black Rats (*Rattus rattus*). The presence and abundance of many bird species (including honeyeaters, raptors, finches and pigeons) are highly variable, depending on seasonal patterns of abundance of resources such as flowering trees and grass seeds.

Seventeen native mammals are known to occur in the Park, including Northern Nail-tail Wallaby (*Onychogalea unguifera*), Northern Brown Bandicoot (*Isodon macrourus*), Sugar Glider (*Petaurus breviceps*), Western Chestnut Mouse (*Pseudomys nanus*), Pale Field-rat

(*Rattus tunneyi*), and the tiny Long-nosed Planigale (*Planigale ingrami*). Kangaroos and wallabies are numerous in the Park, and include at least four species. Little Red Flying Foxes (*Pteropus scapulatus*) are important pollinators and dispersers of native plants.

Many of the animals found in the riverine habitat are significant to the Wardaman people as having connections to ancestral creation beings, and as traditional bush tucker. Traditional Owners are very keen to support fauna conservation efforts.

## Threats

Giwining / Flora River Nature Park lies within the Daly River catchment, which is a focus for agricultural development in the Territory. The Park makes up only 1.5% of this large catchment and is vulnerable to environmental influences within it, especially to changes upstream. The Daly River Management Advisory Committee and other groups have been established to address sustainable use and conservation at the catchment level. Threats to the significant aquatic values of the Daly River catchment include water overuse, land clearing and agricultural development, wildfires, weeds, feral animals, pollution (from fertilisers, sewerage and fuel) and erosion causing sediments to be deposited into the aquatic system (Blanch *et al.* 2005). Almost all such threats to the broader Daly River catchment potentially apply to the aquatic values of the Park.

## Weeds

Some key weeds pose a significant threat to the values of the Park, displacing native plants, reducing food and habitat for native animals, increasing fire intensity and detracting from visitors' experience of the Park. Cattle previously grazed the Park and most weed problems have been inherited from this past land use or have been affected by surrounding land management practices.

Weed management priorities in the Park are assigned according to legislative requirements under the *Weeds Management Act*, associated statutory Weed Management Plans and regional priorities under the Katherine Regional Weed Management Strategy and Action Plan 2005 – 2010. To date 20 weed species have been recorded in the Park. The most significant weeds on the Park in priority order are:

1. *Jatropha gossypifolia* (Bellyache Bush)
2. *Themeda quadrivalvis* (Grader Grass)
3. *Pennisetum polystachion* (Mission Grass)
4. *Parkinsonia aculeata* (Parkinsonia)
5. *Xanthium occidentale* (Noogoora Burr)

Bellyache Bush is a Class B/C declared weed under the *Weeds Management Act* in this area and is widespread throughout the catchment. As the Park is located at the lower end of the Flora catchment (where it joins the Katherine River to form the Daly River), control of weeds such as Bellyache Bush is difficult and ultimately dependent on effective eradication measures upstream of the park.

*Themeda quadrivalvis* (Grader Grass) and *Pennisetum polystachion* (Mission Grass) are also declared Class B/C weeds and under legislation must be controlled. These species, along with Bellyache Bush, must be the focus of weed control efforts on the Park. Parkinsonia (*Parkinsonia aculeata*) and Noogoorra Burr (*Xanthium occidentale*) are also Class B/C weeds that have not yet fully established on the Park and opportunities should be taken to remove them whilst eradication is still possible.

Other weeds found on the Park include Hyptis (*Hyptis suaveolens*), Coffee Senna (*Senna*



*occidentalis*) and Rubber Bush (*Calotropis procera*). Four weed species not yet found in the Park, but of particular concern due to their impact in the region and/or potential impact on visitor values, are *Martynia annua* (Devil's Claw – Class A/C weed), *Ziziphus mauritiana* (Chinee apple – Class A/C), *Acanthospermum hispidum* (Goat's Head Burr – Class B/C) and *Tribulus terrestris* (Caltrop – Class B/C).

## Feral animals

Feral animals have had a detrimental impact on the natural and cultural values of the Park. They introduce and disperse weeds, and trample and consume native vegetation. Such actions have increased soil erosion, polluted waterways, displaced and killed native wildlife, and damaged traditional bush foods and cultural sites.

Feral animal species recorded in the Park include cattle, donkey, horse, pig, cat, buffalo, Cane Toad and Black Rat. The most significant feral animals on the Park in priority order are:

1. Cattle
2. Pigs
3. Black Rat

In the past, large numbers of cattle have entered the Park, causing significant problems for Park managers. Pigs are also a problem, but their numbers inside the Park are relatively low. Pigs dig up patches of riparian habitat, destroying vegetation and diminishing the Park's scenic value.

The 47 kilometre Park boundary is fully stock-proof fenced and includes six floodgates. There is a basic gate at the Park entrance, which Park Rangers lock when the Park is closed during the wet season. The gate remains open at all other times, which allows large feral animals to enter the Park. Installation of a cattle grid may occur in 2011, funding dependant.

Park Rangers estimate that 5-15% of the boundary fence is destroyed each year by wet season rains or floods, allowing cattle and other large animals to enter the Park. Fencing is fixed as soon as practical in the early dry season, and cattle inside the Park are removed through liaison with neighbours and other stakeholders. Park Rangers opportunistically remove cattle and maintain several pig traps throughout the dry season.

Traditional Owners are supportive of current efforts to remove feral animals, in particular pigs, because of the damage they do to the habitats of bush tucker plants and animals.

Black Rats (*Rattus rattus*) may prey on significant species such as the Purple-crowned Fairy-wren. These introduced rats were recorded in riparian forest near the main campground in 2008, and have probably been introduced with building material, or visitors' vehicles. While their population is small and localised there is a good chance of successful control, and occasional monitoring would ensure that any future introductions can be controlled.

*“Pigs are no good. We worry about them digging up turtle eggs and causing other problems in the Park”*

## Managing fire

The Wardaman people have a long history of using fire to manage the land, to open up country for access, hunting and ceremonial purposes. By and large, traditional burning was patchy, resulting in a mosaic of vegetation communities at different stages of recovery from fire, promoting diversity of habitat. Large wildfires were few and rare.

*“The grass along this river area should be burned in the cold time to help plants grow and get rid of weeds. The best time of year to burn is April to June”*

*“Keep fire away from palms and the yams. Don’t burn the Bush Tea Leaf, Casuarina and Milkwood, which all grow in the same area. Also try to avoid burning the bigger trees, such as the Corkwood, White Gum and Carbeen. If one species goes, several do”*

When pastoralism became a major land use in the area, the effect upon fire patterns was dramatic. Some areas were burnt frequently to promote new growth for cattle feed and in an attempt to control cattle-ticks and worms. Other areas remained unburnt and ungrazed for long periods before being burnt in hot, late dry season wildfires, often started by lightning. Over time, pastoralists varied their approach to managing fire. Firebreaks were established around grazing paddocks, boundaries and infrastructure to prevent broad scale wildfire incursion. The Flora River was used as a firebreak. Fire was often used to control weeds or to thin out woodlands to reduce competition for pasture grasses. This new fire regime was generally one of increased fire frequency and intensity. Habitat diversity was diminished over large parts of the country, including the area now managed as the Park.

Since the Park was created, managing fire has been a key management action. Prescribed low-intensity burns are undertaken in the early dry season to protect infrastructure and the Park boundary, create a patchwork effect, and protect the larger area of the Park from wildfire. Where possible, prescribed burning is also undertaken within a few days of rain in the early wet season, to aid the regeneration of vegetation and protect the surface soil structure. Park Rangers use slashers, graders and herbicides to reduce fuel loads and create firebreaks. In recent years, a long-term approach has been developed for fire management in the Park, with annual action plans directed by a strategic plan that is reviewed every few years.

The Park’s Traditional Owners retain their traditional knowledge of fire and its use in the landscape. They want to be involved in all aspects of fire management on the Park and have their interests and approaches incorporated into Park management programs. Traditional Owners work as, or alongside, Rangers exchanging knowledge and practices in implementing fire action plans.

By mapping fires and monitoring the recovery of vegetation after fire, the relationship between different types of fire and vegetation is becoming better understood. In recent years, spatial and other data relating to fires in the Park have been merged with the Park’s biophysical dataset. With this data, fire management planning and decision-making are based on sound information. Fuel loads can be estimated, fire exclusion areas identified and firebreaks planned.

Wildfires can be very destructive, especially at the hot end of the dry season. Wildfires on the Park are fought and extinguished if possible. Depending on the size of the fire, either direct attack or back-burning techniques are utilised. Fire can enter the Park from neighbouring land. It can also originate in the Park and enter neighbouring land. Fire management is therefore a matter for cooperation and communication with neighbouring landholders. Park Rangers currently work closely with neighbours when burning boundary firebreaks and when controlling fires that have escaped or entered the Park. Park Rangers also liaise frequently with staff from Bushfires NT, and receive on-ground assistance from them when it is requested.

### **Aims**

- The Park’s natural features, character and aesthetic values protected with emphasis on protecting riparian forests from the damaging impacts of fire, feral animals, weeds and people
- Indigenous knowledge and skills integrated into management programs.

### **Management Directions**

**2. Landscape** – The natural character of the Park will be protected. Any development will be carefully sited and designed to be in harmony with the natural environment and significant sites, so as not to detract from the Park’s landscape and scenic values.

**3. Soil Erosion** – Minimise disturbance to the Park's soils. Rehabilitate any areas severely impacted by feral animals or human activity, with priority given to the riverine corridor. Site infrastructure and facilities to avoid areas susceptible to erosion and minimise soil disturbance during any construction. Seek expert advice prior to development and for rehabilitation. Erect signs advising visitors to keep off rehabilitation sites and to keep to designated tracks.

**4. Tufa Formations** – Opportunistically monitor tufa formations to ensure they remain intact. If damage is noted then determine cause of impact and take action when damage is sustained through preventable actions.

**5. Park Infrastructure** – Design all developments on Park to avoid compromising water quality and local surface hydrology. In particular, design toilet systems to minimise risk of water contamination.

**6. River Health** – Work together as part of a cooperative group of land managers within the catchment and the larger Daly River catchment to protect ground and surface water. Park managers will regularly liaise and cooperate with groups set up to address conservation issues at the catchment level (e.g. Daly River Management Advisory Committee).

**7. Watercraft** – Regulate the use of watercraft in the river to protect natural and cultural values, to prevent soil erosion and water pollution, and to promote visitor safety and enjoyment.

**8. Significant Plant and Animal Species and Communities** – Plant and animal species and communities of high cultural and/or natural value will be subject to low-key monitoring and dedicated protection from threats. Such actions will include the following:

- Protect riparian forest communities from hot, late dry-season wildfires, and periodically assess the condition, including status, of species such as *Livistona mariae ssp. rigida* (Garabany) and *Casuarina cunninghamiana* (Lalmarrin),
- Results of the annual Pig-nosed Turtle survey will be recorded into the NTG Fauna Database, to indicate the trend in population size over time, and an annual report will be written.
- Record observations of Purple-crowned Fairy Wren and Freshwater Sawfish into the NTG Fauna Database.

**9. Hunting and Bush Tucker Collection** – Traditional Owners will exercise their rights to harvest some animals and plants as bush tucker but will continue to forgo their right to use firearms when hunting on the Park. The impact of this traditional harvest will be managed if necessary to ensure sustainable populations.

**10. Firewood** – Collection from within the Park is prohibited to preserve important habitat.

**11. Weed Management** – Management of weeds will continue to take a strategic, catchment-scale approach by implementing a long-term (5-10 year) weed strategy and annually-reviewed action plans. Park operations must comply with the *Weed Management Act* including all associated statutory management plans.

Weed management actions will be implemented through a succinct, targeted weed program, developed in conjunction with, and using the standards developed by the Weed Management Branch NRETAS.

The Weed management program will focus on practical weed control methods, practices to minimise the number of weeds being brought into the Park, effective survey and monitoring, and including the concerns of the Traditional Owners. Weed management will concentrate in priority order on the following:

- Controlling Bellyache Bush, Grader Grass and Mission Grass (*Pennisetum polystachion*) as per the statutory Management Plan(s) or advice from Weeds Management Branch.
- Eradicating Parkinsonia and Noogoorra Burr, given they currently occur in isolated, small areas and can be opportunistically targeted.
- Any new weed incursion(s) will be assessed against legislative and statutory requirements, regional priorities and the current Park priority list before any action is taken, or changes made to the current priorities.

**12. Feral Animal Control** – Management actions will be implemented through a succinct, targeted program, developed in conjunction with, and using standards developed by Wildlife Management and Biodiversity Conservation, NRETAS. It will focus on practical, cost-effective control methods, effective monitoring, and include the concerns of the Traditional Owners. Feral animal management will concentrate in priority order on the following:

- Continue to monitor for pigs, particularly in sensitive riparian areas, and remove at the earliest opportunity.
- Complete the boundary fencing of the entire Park and install a cattle grid at the park entrance. Maintain boundary fences to a high, stock-proof standard.
- Continue to monitor the Park for cattle and work closely with neighbours to keep cattle out of the Park and their timely removal.
- Monitor annually for Black Rats at the campground(s) and remove when found.

**13. Fire Management** – Manage fire strategically by implementing a long-term (5-10 year) fire strategy and annually-reviewed action plans, developed in conjunction with Bushfires NT. The partners will jointly implement the fire management program, paying particular regard to:

- Protecting people, personal property and infrastructure from fire (highest priority);
- Protecting the riverine corridor and riparian forests from hot wildfires through active management in the early dry season;
- Protecting vulnerable cultural sites from fire damage;
- Reducing fuel and / or maintaining firebreaks to prevent wildfires from entering or exiting the Park and limiting the area of the Park burnt;
- Restricting open campfires to designated fireplaces in the Visitor Zone. In other zones, campfires may be permitted subject to conditions that minimise the impact and risk of wildfire;
- Involving the Park's neighbours and considering their interests;
- Maintaining data that will inform sound fire management decision-making and help in understanding fire-habitat relationships; and
- Training requirements and competency standards for PWS staff, participating Traditional Owners and volunteers.

### **Performance Measures**

- Tufa formations are intact and no preventable damage is sustained
- Riparian forest communities are wildfire-free.
- No more than 25% of the Park, excluding riparian forest communities, are burnt each year.
- PWS working together with the Weeds Management Branch on statutory weed requirements.
- Coverage of Class B/C weeds in riparian areas will not increase over the life of this Plan, based on figures in the 2011 Weed Action Plan.
- The Park boundary fence is maintained to a stock-proof standard and the cattle grid is installed.

## Cultural Values

*“Young people men and women need to learn from old people, the Dreaming. That’s what this is about. Sharing our knowledge and culture, from the heart”*

### A Living Culture

Giwining / Flora River Nature Park is part of a living cultural landscape. The Traditional Owners have a rich cultural heritage and maintain a strong connection with this country. The Park’s cultural values include their stories and traditions, their Dreamings and associated sacred sites. Water is central to Wardaman culture. The river, its springs and the aquifers associated with Giwining / Flora River Nature Park all feature strongly in Wardaman creation stories. A traditional welcome to the Park involves wetting the head of a new visitor with water from the river. This practice introduces the ‘stranger’ to the country and its spirits. Further details about the importance of the Flora River, and of water in general to the Wardaman people, can be found in the creation story (Section 1 and in Cooper and Jackson 2008)

The Traditional Owners wish to share some of their Dreaming stories with visitors (see below).

For the Traditional Owners, it is vital that culture is kept strong through knowing and caring for country, and passing this knowledge on to future generations. Families therefore need opportunities to visit country and teach young people their cultural inheritance.

Some plants found on the Park, such as *Livistona rigida* (Garnbany) and *Casuarina cunninghamiana* (Lalmarrin), are of high cultural significance to the Wardaman people. Some plants continue to be a source of food, medicine and tools, including *Buchanania obovata* (Green Plum - Gulid), *Ficus racemosa* (River Fig - Mirdiwan), *Vitex glabrata* (Black Plum - Buda) and several yam species. Wardaman women are currently exploring the harvest of *Ocimum tenuiflorum* (Bush Tea Leaf – Yarlarrg) for sale. This project may be expanded to allow larger scale sustainable harvest as part of a commercial venture.

#### **Dreaming Stories of Giwining / Flora River Nature Park (see Table 1 and Map 2)**

The lower Flora River which includes the Flora River Nature Reserve is known to Wardaman People as Giwining. During the period known to the Wardaman as the buwarraja, the “Dreamtime”, the earth was featureless - “it was just sand”. The ancestors of the plants, natural phenomena and animals we know today had human form and their activities created and named the landscape and the laws that govern and order human society. At the end of the Dreamtime, the creative ancestors took their present day form; however, they continue to live on in features of the landscape and in the songs, laws and customs that the Wardaman follow today.

The stories are summaries of longer accounts told by Traditional Owners Bill Yidumduma Harney and Lily Gin.gina (deceased) to John Laurence and David Martin, and transcribed and paraphrased by John Laurence (6 February 2009). They cover four independent but interrelated events. Parts of these stories are not open publicly and are held by older Wardaman men and women.

The first story, which is part of a longer series of events on Wardaman country to the south, tells how the course of the river was created. The second recounts the Pig-nosed Turtle’s struggle with Short-necked Turtle and Barramundi over rights to use the river. The third story recounts the establishment of a number of social institutions – initiation and trade, while the fourth outlines a dispute that resulted in the creation of a number of important sites on the Flora, including Kathleen Falls.

#### **Story one – The formation of the lower Flora River – Giwining (green sites)**

In the Dreamtime all the country was flat. No trees, or rivers were here – it was just sand. And Dreamings were all human beings. Just like you and me. The fight of the Lightning Brothers

[Janganyaniwung – the Two Gekko Men] on Delamere to the south, caused the first rain. On what is now the Upper Flora, on Innesvale Station, the rain was backing up into a flood. Olive Python (Gunutjarri) said to Blackhead Python (Gurrbijimin) “Don’t sing that rain [to make it stop], open up a creek to the east”. Blackhead Python used her yam stick [hardened digging stick] to open up the Flora. She opened the Mathison at Ninin and her stick caused a spring to flow at Yibulkbulkbaya. Grasshopper men who were travelling with the snakes dived down under the ground and came up at Yinggawuyma. They started the water bubbling up from the ground there, and later became the reeds along the banks of the river. Blackhead Python pushed her yam stick under the ground all the way to Mataranka. The water comes underground from there to the springs on the Flora.

### **Story two – Lower stretch of river within reserve (black sites)**

This is true – the old people told us. Short-necked Turtle called Bambidi used to live around this area. He painted red and white stripes on his face and he carried the children of Rainbow around on his back. Pig-nosed Turtle [Jarrul] came up the Daly to the Flora junction [Wudanbu]. Jarrul was looking for a place to nest.

Short-necked Turtle and Barramundi said “You can’t come up Wudanbu Junction. We stop you. You can’t come up the river”

Short-necked Turtle, Barramundi and Willy Wagtail built the tufa dams along the Flora [at Jiman and Gewalambala], so Pig-nosed Turtle travelled up the Katherine to Scott Creek. But he couldn’t find a nesting site and returned to the dams on the Flora.

“You can’t stop me, I’ve got two hands to push you away,” he told Short-necked Turtle.

But Pig-nosed couldn’t climb the dams and instead laid his eggs at Kumbitj Jurrala on the north side of the river. He returned to Daly and travelled downstream to the junction with the Ferguson. He’s still there today in the form of a large rock.

### **Story three – Middle stretch of river within reserve (white sites)**

Willy Wagtail made many stone tools at Warrikbang Hill. But Bowerbird (Gorrijgorrij) was watching and when Willy Wagtail looked away he stole them and took them to Gindanya on the other side of the river. The old people – the Casuarina and Palm people, noticed that white quartz was missing from Warrikbang Hill and sat and watched for the thief. But they argued and went their separate ways.

Marbiling (Nail-tailed Wallaby) and Gojokgojok (Bar-shouldered Dove) were travelling from the north-east. Gojokgojok in the lead, dancing, with Marbiling behind carrying bamboo spear shafts to trade (yulun) for stone tools.

They carried out ceremony with Willy Wagtail at Jigjarijga and the Women danced at Kulbinji, but while they were waiting for the stone tools, Marbiling got angry and threw the bamboo spear shafts to Janing on the Edith River. Further up stream he grabbed Gojokgojok and threw him into the river where he changed into a rock at Marilynba. The old people were transformed into the Casuarinas, Paperbarks and Palms that line the Flora today. Marbiling returned to Warrikbang Hill where he stayed.

### **Story four – Upper stretch of river within the Park (red sites)**

The old people were having a big ceremony at Wurrkleni (on Willeroo Station to the south-west of the Flora). Rainbow (Gondolmi), Pheasant Coucal (Girribuk) and Walaminmin (small bat species) were there and Warlung (Ghost Bat) was there with his two wives – Walijbang (Red Wing Parrot) and Denening (Rainbow Lorikeet). The bats danced while Rainbow and Pheasant played the didgeridoo. Rainbow played so well, that Red Wing Parrot and Rainbow Lorikeet ran off with him while Ghost Bat slept.

Warlung tracked and followed them as they headed north to Yinggawuyma [aka Noyimaya – “Blowing water”] on the Flora. Where they met another mob – Catfish Mob - from Yibulbanya painted up with red ochre. Rainbow started to play the didgeridoo. Everyone was dancing and singing. Ghost Bat (Warlung) came out painted up – “Oh, he’s a good dancer,” said the mob – and he started kicking up the dust. He was dragging a spear with his big toe, each dance step bringing it closer and closer. Still those girls didn’t like him.

The dance finished and Ghost Bat sat down next to his spear. He pulled hair from his armpit and placed it on the fire. He got a fan and dancing with the firestick fanned the smoke. The smoke made



everyone sleep - a deep sleep.

Ghost Bat sang out. Nobody moved, everybody snoring. He was fanning everyone with smoke.

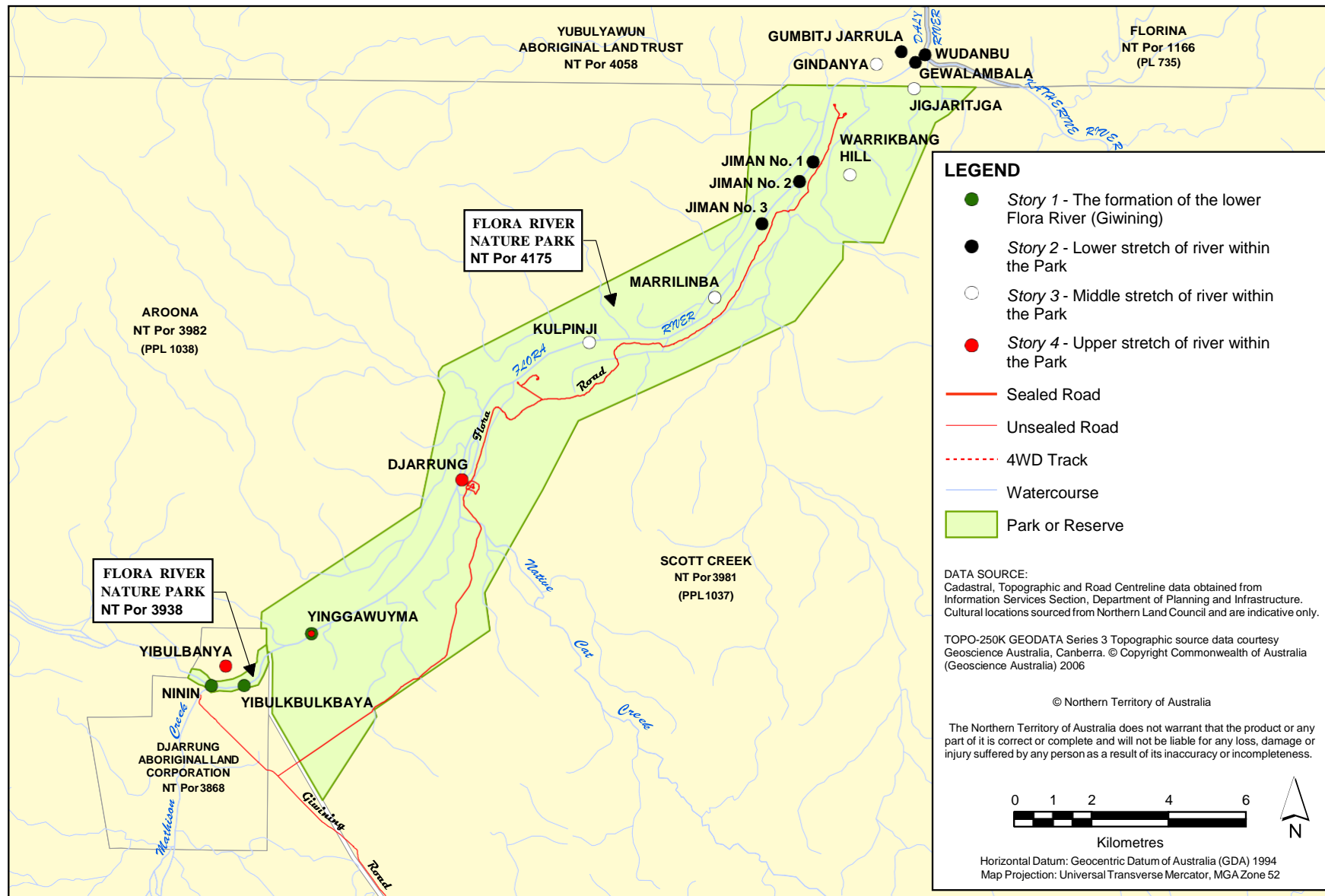
Rainbow was sleeping in the middle, Red Wing Parrot and Rainbow Lorikeet were on each side. Ghost Bat crept up and speared Rainbow in the heart. Blood shot out and lifted Rainbow into the river. He floated downstream where became the rock bar and falls at Kathleen Falls – Djarrung.



*Traditional burning of country helps keep it healthy and reduces the frequency of severe wildfires.*



**Map 3. Dreaming Sites of Flora River Nature Park**



**Table 2.** Dreaming Sites of Giwining / Flora River Nature Park (as in Map 2)

Site Name	Map code	Description
Wudanbu	●	Junction of the Giwining / Flora and Katherine Rivers. Placename in the Pig-nosed Turtle Story - Bambidi refused to allow Jarrul into the Flora River.
Gewalambala	●	Placename in the Pig-nosed Turtle Story. Falls near turtle nesting site near mouth of Flora River.
Gindanya	●	Placename in the Left-Hand Kangaroo Story. Bowerbird left stone tools here at this un-located site on the western bank of the Flora.
Gumbitj Jarrula	●	Place name in the Pig-nosed Turtle story. Pig-nosed Turtle left eggs at this un-located site on the western bank of the Giwining / Flora River.
Warrikbang Hill	●	Hill - Placename in the Left-Hand Kangaroo story. Willy Wagtail made many stone tools here. They are still in the rock. Marbiling stopped at hill, while Gojokgojok went to the standing stone.
Jigjaritjga	○	Small swamp, Placename in Left-Hand Kangaroo Story. Yimulen - "swamp".
Jiman 1	○	Rapids in Giwining / Flora River. Placename in Pig-nosed Turtle Story. Rapids pushed up by Short-necked Turtle and Willy Wagtail.
Jiman 2	○	Rapids in Giwining / Flora River.
Jiman 3	○	Rapids in Giwining / Flora River. Placename in Pig-nosed Turtle Story. Rapids pushed up by Short-necked Turtle and Willy Wagtail.
Marrilinba	○	On island. Gender Restrictions - men only. No access to island. Canoes and other boats must travel to the west of the rock. Placename in the Left-Hand Kangaroo Story. Gojokgojok went into the water at this place.
Kulbinji	○	Gender Restrictions - women only. No access to island. Fishing from banks okay. Placename in the Left-Hand Kangaroo story. Name means 'body decorations'.
Djarrung	●	Katherine Falls on Giwining / Flora River. Placename in the Rainbow story. Djarrung falls is the metamorphosed body of Rainbow.
Yinggawuyma	●	'Boiling water' on Giwining / Flora River. Placename in Blackhead Python and Rainbow stories. Aka "Noyimaya". Access restrictions apply Canoes and boats must keep away from the 'boiling water'. No fishing from bank closest to water. Warning signage is needed.
Yibulbulkabaya	●	Less restrictions apply. Placename in Blackhead Python story. This unrecorded site is a spring running into Giwining / Flora River downstream from Mathison Junction. Gunutjarri Olive Rock Python (some say Blackhead Python) cut the rock with her yam stick causing water to flow in Giwining / Flora River. The yam stick came out at Gumun (a cave just outside the park), then opened up a passage from Elsey to the Flora. Spring is nocturnal.
Ninin	●	Junction of the Mathison Creek and Giwining / Flora River. Placename in Blackhead Python story. Junction of Giwining / Flora River and Mathison Creek.
Yibulbanya	●	At the junction of Mathison Creek and Giwining / Flora River. Placename in the Rainbow story. Site opposite the junction of Giwining / Flora River and Mathison Creek. Trade (yulun) was carried out here. Associated with White Catfish (Galambuga) and Warrark (Black Catfish).

## Cultural Knowledge

The Traditional Owners of the Park are the Wardaman People who know the river as Giwining. They have a rich cultural heritage and a long and continuing association with the Flora River area. There are many sites of significance to the Wardaman People within the Park, particularly in the riverine area, some of which are registered under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*. There are also archaeological sites in the Park, protected under the *Northern Territory Heritage Conservation Act*.

Stories and traditions, sacred sites and related Dreamings represent significant cultural values. Traditional Owners' connection with land and water involves a complex set of traditional rights, benefits, obligations and responsibilities. Some of these traditions can be shared publicly and provide insight into the connections between the land and its people. This knowledge is intrinsically valuable. Traditional knowledge of plants and animals and traditional land management knowledge are also valued by the PWS and the wider community.

Giwining / Flora River Nature Park is part of the larger Wardaman estate, which also incorporates sections of east Judbarra / Gregory National Park. For the Wardaman Traditional Owners the landscape is a living entity with which they are in life-long interaction and communication. Strong culture comes from connection to country, knowing country well, using and caring for country. Caring for country is an obligation Traditional Owners willingly accept. Their relationship with country involves both rights and responsibilities.

Country and culture can be kept strong, particularly by:

- keeping country productive through burning, and selective hunting and gathering;
- performing ceremony;
- talking with country, and with ancestors;
- preventing damage to the country;
- managing dangerous places so that harm does not come from country; and
- passing on knowledge, rights and responsibilities to successive generations of owners.

The Wardaman have a reciprocal relationship with country. The people have an obligation to care for country and in turn the country will provide and care for its people. The Traditional Owners see themselves as caretakers of a relationship of trust derived from the Dreaming and passed on to them by their immediate forebears.

*"I just come out to listen to the story. Probably take over from my grandfather, and then I'll continue it on and then whenever I have a son, pass it on to him. And then when he grows up, he can pass it on, and keep passing it on to the next generation, and that way it will never be forgotten and then it will always be there for all eternity.... for life"*

Traditional Owners are concerned that traditional knowledge will be lost and want to be sure that knowledge is passed on to the next generation. They want joint management to provide opportunities for Wardaman People of all ages to spend time on country to reinforce traditional knowledge. The Traditional Owners also want the Park Rangers to understand Wardaman culture, knowing that this will help them manage the park in the right ways. There may be opportunities through joint management to address Traditional Owners' cultural interests by recording their histories and knowledge. It must be remembered that their knowledge is their intellectual property and must be carefully managed.

## Wardaman Seasons

The Wardaman Aboriginal Corporation has given permission for their bush calendar to be included here as one way for traditional ecological knowledge to be incorporated into joint

management of the Park (see also Bureau of Meteorology's Indigenous Weather Knowledge website <http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/> and Raymond et al. (1999).

The four Wardaman seasons are defined by weather patterns and happenings in nature such as plant flowering and fruiting, and animal behavioural patterns (Figure 1) with further detailed description of each season including environmental indicators and bush foods available during each season provided in Appendix 2.

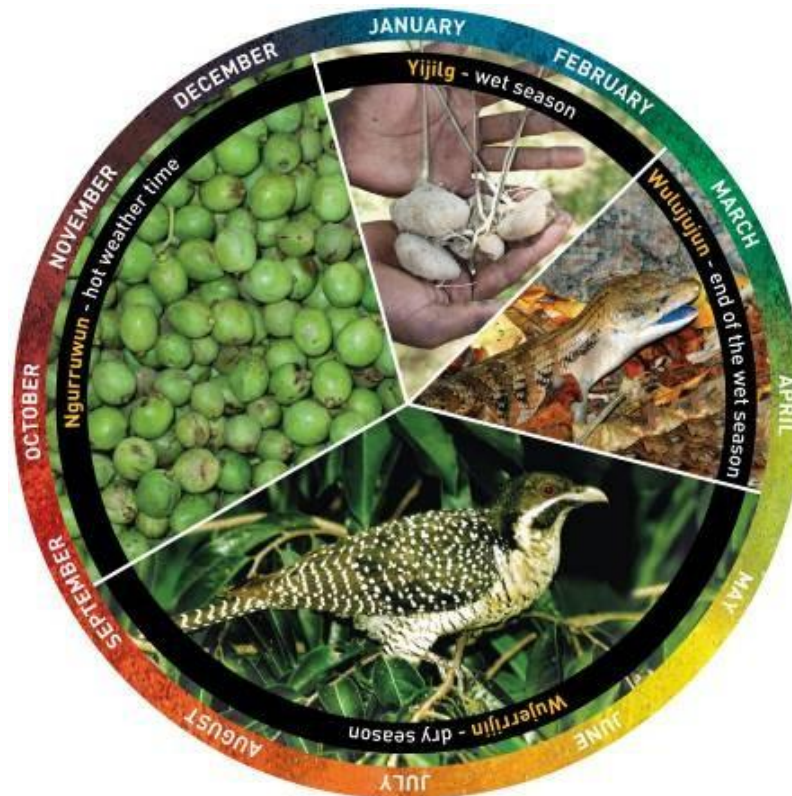


Figure 1. Wardaman Seasonal Calendar

**Yijilg - Wet season (December to February):** This is the Wet season when rain falls daily, often in large amounts. Often travel is restricted due to flooding and the boggy nature of heavy soils on black soil plains.

**Wulujujin - end of the Wet season (February to March):** This season sees the last of the rains and the end of the Wet season.

**Wujerrijin - Dry season (April to September):** This is the Dry season when the weather is cold and no rain falls. The skies are generally clear.

**Ngurruwun - hot weather time (September to December):** This is the hot weather time when the ground becomes very hot to walk on. The first rains begin.

### Traditional Use of Giwining

The Traditional Owners are entitled, under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, to use the natural resources of the land, to hunt wildlife and gather bush foods. They believe however, that the Park is too small and that hunting, especially with firearms may endanger or annoy visitors, and they will continue to forgo this right. Their interest in fishing, and gathering bush foods and medicines within the Park remains high. They acknowledge the conservation significance of the Pig-nosed Turtle (Jurrul) and want to be involved in projects monitoring and protecting this species.

*“We need to make sure we continue with the important traditions, when we’re travelling on the country and introducing visitors to the country”*

## Places of Cultural Significance

Giwining / Flora River Nature Park contains sites of great cultural significance to the Wardaman People. The creation stories name many of these sites and clearly connect the Wardaman with the area (Map 2). These sites need to be protected from unnatural damage and any access restrictions must be respected.

Knowledge of sites, ceremonies and associated stories are often restricted to senior Traditional Owners. Visitor activities in and around sacred sites are controlled under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* and the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act*. Six sites have been recorded in the Park by the NT Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority. Many places of cultural significance (Map 2) lie within the Special Protection Zone (Map 3). Visitors are not permitted to enter these areas (apart from canoeists as specified in Table 1) and only management activities consistent with the directions of the Traditional Owners will be allowed (see Table 1 for specific directions).

The Park also contains archaeological sites and artefacts that are valued by the Traditional Owners as well as by the wider community. The *Heritage Conservation Act* specifically protects archaeological sites and resources in the Northern Territory regardless of whether they are recorded or not. There are two known recorded archaeological places within the Park and it is probable that additional and as yet unrecorded places exist.

Processes for protecting sacred and archaeological sites from damage from proposed works or development are detailed in the Special Activities and Development section (page 35).

### Aims

- Ample opportunity for Traditional Owners to maintain their cultural obligations, knowledge and connection to the land within the Park.
- Aboriginal skills and knowledge of country integrated into park management programs.
- Places and objects of Aboriginal cultural significance protected.

### Management Directions

**14. Access to Country** – Support Traditional Owners’ rights and obligations to visit and use country to maintain cultural traditions. The Yarrayan Campground may be used as a base for their visits. Joint management programs will allow for Traditional Owners to fulfil customary obligations. Pursue other supporting resources as required.

**15. Respect for Cultural Business** – Traditional Owners’ authority on cultural matters will be respected. Senior Traditional Owners may supervise access and advise on appropriate behaviour if PWS staff are required to access culturally sensitive areas. Parts of the Park may occasionally be closed for short periods to allow Traditional Owners to conduct ceremony. Adequate public notice will be given by PWS regarding any such closures.

**16. Sacred Sites** – For sacred site clearance processes see Special Activities and Development section (page 35). Access restrictions will apply for the following special protection zone sites (Map 3):

- Registered Site 5268-22, Marrilinba – access to the island is allowed only to Aboriginal men. Canoes must pass to the west of the rock.
- Registered Site 5268-24, Kulpinji – access to the island is allowed only to Aboriginal women. Fishing from the riverbank is allowed.

**17. Registered Site 5268-7, Yinggawuyma** – access restricted. Boats must keep away from the ‘boiling’ water

**18. Unregistered Site 5258-8, Yibulkbulkabaya** – access restricted.



**19. Heritage Sites** - For clearance processes regarding archaeological places and objects see Special Activities and Development section (page 35).

**20. Traditional Use** – Traditional and legal rights to hunt and gather will be respected. Rights to harvest plant materials from the Park for traditional purposes will extend only to Traditional Owners. Gathering of plant foods and materials by others will require the approval of the Giwining Joint Management Committee (GJMC) and normal approval processes. The GJMC will review harvesting practices from time to time to ensure that use in the Park is sustainable and that visitors' experiences are not significantly affected. Traditional Owners will continue to forgo the use of firearms when hunting in the Park.

**21. Cultural Heritage Management Program** – The joint management partners will develop a cultural program and associated guidelines for the Park which will be regularly reviewed. They will provide for Traditional Owners' interests, including time on country, recording and monitoring places or objects of cultural significance, and recording and transferring Aboriginal knowledge as appropriate.

**22. Indigenous Ecological Knowledge** – Indigenous ecological knowledge and skills will be integrated into park management programs where possible and recorded appropriately.

**23. Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property** – The intellectual property rights of Traditional Owners will be protected through the Departmental Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property policy. The recording, storage and use of cultural information will be consistent with the directions of Traditional Owners through the GJMC and with overarching policy agreed between the NLC and PWS.

#### **Performance Measures**

- Traditional Owners report no significant adverse impacts on sites of cultural significance.
- The GJMC are satisfied that Aboriginal skills and knowledge of country continue to be integrated into park management.

## Managing For Visitors

Traditional Owners want to share their country and culture and enthusiastically welcome visitors to the Park. They also want visitors to learn about and respect the area's values, and enjoy the Park in safety. The joint management partners believe good visitor information is a key to those outcomes. They also want visitors to have well maintained facilities befitting the Park's character. Traditional owners believe that visitor numbers may be increased if appropriate cultural tourism opportunities were offered. Various options in establishing a tourism enterprise or partnering with an existing tourism company are being explored by Traditional Owners.

## Activities and Facilities

The typical visitor camps overnight and has an uncrowded, relaxing time taking short bushwalks through the riverside forests, enjoying the native wildlife and photographing the stunning river scenery, including the remarkable tufa formations. An estimated one third of visitors use a boat on the river for a closer experience of the watercourse and its wildlife. Fishing is a popular activity.

About 1200 people visited the Park in 2009. Most visitors travel privately to the Park and visit in the cooler dry season (May and August). Access to the Park is via the unsealed Giwining (Flora) Road, which leaves the Victoria Highway 86 kilometres west of Katherine. It is 36 kilometres to the Park entrance from the Victoria Highway. Both the access road and main road within the Park are suitable for conventional vehicles, with care, during the dry season. The Park becomes inaccessible to all vehicles after heavy rain and is closed to visitors during the wet season (usually between November and March). The roads to and within the Park are maintained by the NT Department of Planning and Infrastructure (Roads Division).

Facilities in the Park include:

- About 20 shaded camping sites at the Djarrung Campground, with amenities that include drinking water, wood fireplaces, picnic tables and ablution block with solar hot water showers and flushing toilets. Fees are payable through an honesty system.
- The Djarrung day-use area with picnic facilities and two bushwalks of about one kilometre and half-a-kilometre to the Djarrung Falls tufa dams and Kathleen Falls tufa dams respectively.
- The low-key Yarrayan day-use area with picnic facilities.
- A canoe and boat launching facility is located four kilometres from Djarrung, Canoe's may also be launched at the Yarrayan day-use area, located in the north of the Park. Canoe's may only be launched by permitted operators as part of commercial tours.
- Orientation information and interpretive signs.

The Djarrung campground is for public use while the Yarrayan campground at the northern end of the Park has been developed more recently, primarily for joint management activities. The Djarrung campground is rarely full, but if visitor numbers increase, the Yarrayan campground may also be developed for public use. Pets are not allowed in the Park and generators can not be used so that visitors can enjoy a peaceful and relaxing experience.

The use of powered vessels in the river is confined to a five kilometre section of the river (within the visitor zone, see Map 3) in the middle section of the Park. It is prohibited to use bait for catching fish to prevent accidentally capturing turtles.

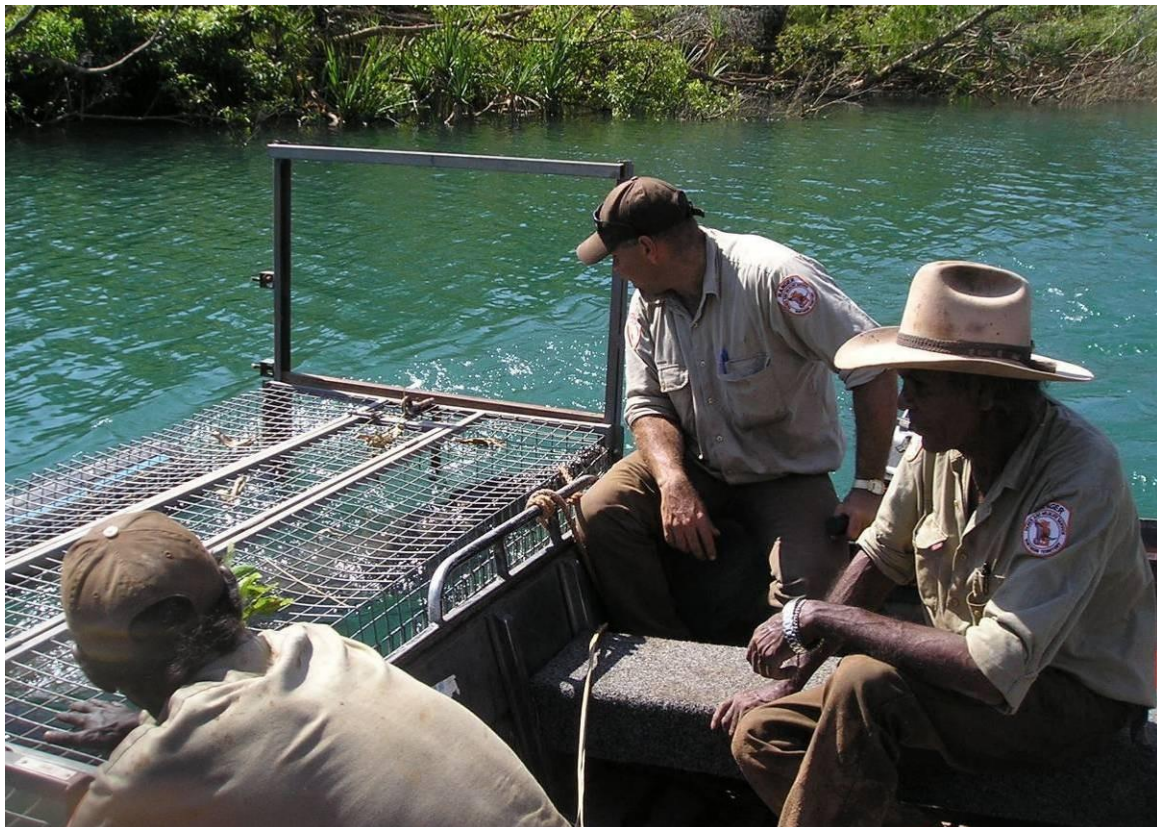


One commercial tour operator was running canoe tours in the Park for many years, however they have not accessed the Park with a tour group since 2006. There are currently no commercial businesses operating on the Park, although Traditional Owners are interested in exploring commercial tourism opportunities.

## Visitor Safety

Saltwater Crocodiles are present in the Flora River system, and swimming in the river is therefore prohibited. Crocodiles are managed in accordance with the Katherine River Saltwater Crocodile Management Strategy and the Estuarine Crocodile Management for Visitor Safety - Plan for Flora River Nature Park. Park Rangers survey regularly during the dry season, as well as conduct river patrols to maintain traps and remove animals. This does not guarantee the absence of crocodiles. Results of the 2008 independent 'Crocodile Risk Assessment of Flora River Nature Park' indicated a very high risk for canoeists on the river, particularly those not with a permitted commercial operator. In 2009 the joint management partners agreed that canoeing should only be allowed on commercial tours, with strict safety standards being a condition of permit. There is a whirlpool upstream of Djarrung Falls which poses potential danger to watercraft. There are no other significant environmental risks to visitors.

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk, it can be reduced if visitors are prepared for hazards, have realistic expectations and behave appropriately. Having a clear and current set of emergency response procedures, appropriately trained Park Rangers and adequate resources will help effectively manage any emergency incidents that arise.



*Park Rangers prepare to remove a Saltwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) from one of the Park's traps.*

## Information and Interpretation

Information and interpretation plays an important role in visitor management by informing people about the values of the Park and how visitors can respect them. Public education informs visitors about facilities, activities, safety aspects and regulations, and explains or interprets the Park's natural and cultural features.

Interpretive and safety information is currently provided in the Djarrung Campground and beside the trailhead of the two short walks along the river. A park information bay is located outside the Park at the Giwining Road – Victoria Highway intersection. The 2006-7 visitor survey found that Park visitors would like to be able to access more interpretation about the Park's natural and cultural values. The partners want visitors to feel welcome and would like to see visitor information improved over time.

### Aim

- Visitors enjoying the Park safely and respectfully.

### Management Directions

**24. Visitor Facility Planning** – Visitor access, activities and facilities within the Park will be managed and developed according to the Zoning scheme (Table 2, Map 3). Future development will be consistent with a low-key, tranquil visitor experience and protection of Park values.

**25. Campgrounds** – Djarrung campground will be the main public camping facility. The Yarrayan joint management campground may be developed for public use if Park visitation increases significantly. Options to contract campground services will be considered, with Aboriginal businesses or organisations employing Traditional Owners being awarded preference in accordance with joint management agreements.

**26. Access** – Visitors will be encouraged to keep to vehicle and walking tracks to minimise damage to sensitive environments and avoid risk of accidental entry into culturally sensitive areas.

**27. Concession Operations** – When considering applications for Park concession operations, the partners will give preference to tour operators who are Traditional Owners.

**28. Boating and Canoeing** – Canoeing on the river will only be permitted with appropriately licensed tour operators. For safety and to protect Park values the following restrictions will be placed on boats and canoes:

- Powered vessels are confined to the central, 5km section of river, as indicated in Map 3.
- Powered vessels may have a maximum power output of 15 horsepower, are restricted to a speed of 5 knots and must be no longer than 3.6 metres.
- Watercraft will not be permitted upstream of Djarrung Falls or downstream of the last canoe portage (as per Map 3).
- Canoeists on tours will be required to use portages provided and take care not to damage the tufa formations.
- Visitors must not access islands within the river system. Watercraft must travel on the west and northwest sides of the islands and keep away from the whirlpool upstream of Djarrung Falls.
- Boats must be launched at the boat ramp. Canoes must be launched at either the boat ramp or Yarrayan day-use area.

**29. Impacts of Boats** –The effect of wash from outboard motors on the banks of the Flora River will be monitored, and control measures (such as limiting boat numbers) introduced if necessary. Visitors and tour operators will be encouraged to use electric motors to limit pollution. Activities which have the potential to pollute waterways in the Park will not be permitted.

**30. Fishing** – To avoid accidental capture of turtles, use of lures only (no bait) will be permitted in the Park. Northern Territory bag limits will apply.

**31. Temporary Park Closures** – Access to the Park, or to areas within the Park, may be restricted for environmental, cultural or safety reasons.

**32. Visitor Information** – Giwining Joint Management Committee are to regularly review all available visitor information and update as required, subject to resources.

- Erect additional signs where appropriate to warn visitors of hazards, install regulatory information and pictograms and provide further cultural and joint management information.
- Use Wardaman words and language in visitor information to enhance cultural appreciation.
- Check all shared cultural information for accuracy and ensure it is approved by the appropriate Aboriginal people (as identified by the NLC) and consistent with policy to protect Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP – see page 22).

**33. Crocodiles** – Continue to implement the Katherine River Saltwater Crocodile Management Strategy and the Estuarine Crocodile Management for Visitor Safety - Plan for Flora River Nature Park to reduce the potential for harm to visitors.

**34. Generators** – Generators may not be used on the Park without a PWS permit.

**35. Pets** – Pets will not be allowed in the Park without a PWS permit.

**36. Firewood** – The collection of firewood on the Park will be prohibited.

**37. Swimming** – Swimming in the Flora River in the Park will be prohibited to reduce the risk of crocodile attack.

**38. Risk Assessment** – Continue to assess the risks from the Park's facilities and visitor management practices. Any identified risks will be rectified on a priority basis.

**39. Emergency Response** – Review and update the emergency response plan for the Park annually before each visitor season. Train all staff appropriately and report emergency incidents and accidents to the Giwining Joint Management Committee.

### Performance Measures

- There are no preventable cases of injury or death as a result of Saltwater Crocodile attack.
- Visitor satisfaction with the Park and its facilities is at least 90%.



*Park Rangers and flexible employment staff install bollards at Djarrung campground.*

## Governance

The joint management partners of the Park believe that:

- Governance must be consistent with statutory requirements and obligations.
- Decision making and accountability should be equally shared between the partners.
- Indigenous decision making processes should always be respected.
- Management priorities should be based on the Park's key values, as jointly identified.
- Working together and spending time on country is central to developing mutual trust, respect and understanding.
- Participation and employment of Traditional Owners in operational programs is basic to joint management success.
- Joint Management needs to continuously adapt and improve; monitoring and evaluation supports this process.
- Resources are limited and must be efficiently used.
- The Park is not an island but is connected naturally and culturally to surrounding country.
- Public support for joint management is very important.

## Planning and Decision-making

Managing Giwining / Flora River Nature Park with respect for indigenous cultural values and interests is not new to the joint management partners as the Traditional Owners of Giwining have been involved in Park management through the Flora River Local Management Committee since 1993. New joint management brings extra meaning to this relationship. As joint management partners PWS and Traditional Owners now share responsibility for developing an equitable partnership that achieves the legislated objectives of joint management.

### Building Effective Governance through Monitoring and Evaluation

The partners were meeting regularly to share in the business and decision-making of the Park's management while this Plan was being prepared. The preparation of this plan by the joint management partners also marks a positive beginning to joint management. The partners realise that the partnership will need to keep growing and improving through commitment and new skills in governance. For the purposes of this plan, 'governance' means how the partners organise themselves to work towards their vision. It includes all aspects of communication, partnership, planning and decision-making.

This plan sets out a framework for the Park's governance. In doing so it marks a solid start, but by itself will not guarantee effective governance. By monitoring joint management, the partners will be able to identify problems and make changes early, and in doing so, continue to improve and build strong governance over time. Since 2007 the partners, with assistance from the NLC, have been working on a pilot program with staff from Charles Darwin University to set up a joint management monitoring and evaluation program for Giwining / Flora River Nature Park.

The joint management partners have together defined indicators of social, economic and



conservation success for the Park. These desired outcomes form the focus of the aims and management directions of this Plan. In 2007 the following outcomes for joint management (and the means to assess their achievement) were agreed:

- Keeping culture strong (culture camps, two-way learning, protecting cultural sites);
- Benefits to Traditional Owners (direct employment, contracting work, business enterprise);
- Good working relationships between the partners (partners' satisfaction, good communication, Aboriginal voices heard in planning and management meetings, understanding of financial management, availability of cultural information relating to the Park);
- Good park management (healthy country / biodiversity, good partnership with other stakeholders, infrastructure in the Park and around the camps and other areas is well maintained, visitors satisfaction); and
- Strong community ownership of joint management through strong participation in decision making (clarity of roles and responsibilities among all stakeholders, strong and effective joint management committee, good facilitation at meetings).

The monitoring and evaluation program will use these outcomes and indicators as the basis for assessing the effectiveness of joint management.

## **A Partnership Approach**

Joint management is an opportunity for better management decisions based on a combination of indigenous knowledge and principles and contemporary, scientific approaches. Positive working relationships based on mutual understanding, trust and respect are basic to strong joint management. A shared understanding of country and culture is vital to joint management decision-making. The partners recognise that the partnership will be dynamic and their capacity to be effective partners will need to grow, through experience and appropriate training. Traditional Owners want to teach Park Rangers and visitors cross-cultural skills, language and Aboriginal land management techniques. In turn, Park Rangers want to share their knowledge of planning, budgeting, organisational structures and scientific management with Traditional Owners. Respecting differences and a commitment to understanding each others' views will make for a strong relationship and provide the basis for effective governance and joint management of the Park.

Communication warrants special consideration, for the partnership spans two different cultures, each with their own world view and language. While the Traditional Owners have a direct interest in park operations, they cannot all be continuously engaged in day to day activities. Furthermore, PWS staff can readily communicate with each other through the workplace, while Traditional Owners who live in different places cannot maintain such constant contact with each other. The NLC and PWS therefore need to help in this regard. Providing feedback to Traditional Owners through verbal reports at country camps and meetings and written reports for those not in attendance is vital.

## **Respecting Aboriginal Decision-making**

Aboriginal cultural traditions must be considered in establishing governance for the Park. They will strongly influence who attends meetings, who has the right to make decisions for others and the timeframes required for decisions to be made.

The Giwining / Flora River Nature Park incorporates sections of the traditional countries of two Wardaman clans, Yubulyawun whose country extends west from Flora River, and Wunggayajawun whose country extends south and east from the river. However, clan members do not make decisions, even about their own clan estates, without reference to

others.

*“We [Yubulyawun clan] are boss for this part of Giwining, Flora River. But further down, everybody shares it, all the way down. Those from the eastern side [Wunggayajawun clan] come in too, they share it out. This one river, Giwining, belongs to everyone [Wardaman]”*

The authority to make decisions concerning lands within the Giwining / Flora River Nature Park depends upon interrelated factors such as knowledge of Law and country – especially its sacred geography – seniority, and traditional connections to the area or locale in question. The Traditional Owners of an area are accorded respect and the right to make decisions about it, but typically, they do not act as individuals. Further, when decisions are being made on issues which may impact more generally, there is an expectation that a wider group of Wardaman will want to participate in the decision making process.

Traditional, lawful Wardaman decision-making about country is rarely, if ever, limited to a single Traditional Owner or even a small group, but involves careful consultation and negotiation with the wider group who have connections (such as through kinship) to the country. Further, senior Wardaman men and women, who may not be Traditional Owners for the area in question but who nonetheless are knowledgeable about Law and country, will typically be consulted and play a role in any final decision.

While hierarchical authority structures are not a feature of Wardaman society, matters of seniority, traditional knowledge and customary entitlements are key elements of decision-making processes that operate within a framework of inclusiveness and participation by the wider group. Senior people may ultimately make certain decisions, but Wardaman emphasise the right of all Wardaman to participate in the process. Concerns can arise if decisions are made without this wider participation. For these reasons, decision-making for the Park needs to include the voice of people from the wider Wardaman group, as well as from the two Traditional Owner clans. The benefits and rights of any Wardaman person to participate in meetings is recognised.

## **Clear Roles and Responsibilities**

Effective governance, including shared planning and decision-making, requires clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the people and groups involved. The decisions to be made in managing the Park fall broadly into two groups: 1) policy and planning and 2) Park operations. One of the most important distinctions to be made regarding roles and responsibilities is that between the decision-making group or committee, and Parks staff.

For **Traditional Owners**, people within particular clan estates have responsibility for decision-making, ownership and caretaking. Traditional Owners also have responsibilities for managing Aboriginal knowledge and passing it on to the right people, looking after the land and its resources, maintaining sacred sites and keeping the country alive.

The **Parks and Wildlife Service** has been nominated by the Territory as its representative as the joint management partner with the Park’s Traditional Owners. The Parks and Wildlife Service is responsible for day-to-day management of the Park under the direction of the Joint Management Committee. The Parks and Wildlife Service is required to finance and resource the Park’s ongoing management, including administrative functions, staffing, infrastructure and visitor services. Parks and Wildlife Service employees are responsible to the Minister for Parks and Wildlife and the head of the Department.

The **Northern Land Council** has an important role in assisting joint management. The NLC primarily represent and protect the interests of Traditional Owners in Park management. This includes attending GJMC meetings and facilitating information to the Wardaman so that informed joint management decisions can be made by the Traditional Owners.

The **Giwining Joint Management Committee** (GJMC) includes representatives of each of

the joint management partners. Their role is to set the broad direction for management of the Park guided by relevant legislation, this Plan and other jointly developed policy and guidelines. The GJMC will be the principal decision-making body for the Park, and will consist of:

- Six Traditional Owners consisting of two representatives of the Yubulyawun clan, two representatives of the Wunggayajawun clan, and two other Wardaman, nominated by the Park's Traditional Owners. Each of these members may nominate a proxy to attend meetings in their absence.
- At least two, and up to four, PWS staff.
- Proxies and other Wardaman People, especially young people with an interest in the management of the Park, will be welcomed to GJMC meetings. The partners may from time to time invite other people to meetings to provide advice on particular issues or represent community interests (for example, tourism).
- The joint management partners will define and document the functions, procedures and other governance standards of the GJMC as a high priority.

Through working together on park projects the partners will foster a higher level of understanding of each other's values and interests and therefore develop a stronger relationship resulting in better governance.

## Resolving Disputes

The joint management partners know they need to continue to communicate clearly and openly with each other and that communication within the wider of group of Traditional Owners is kept strong. From time to time however, disputes may occur. The joint management partners will aim to resolve disputes through open discussion and communication, involving the NLC as required or requested by the Traditional Owners. However, should a dispute arise between the joint management partners that cannot be resolved, the partners agree to jointly appoint an independent mediator to facilitate a mutually acceptable decision.

### Aims

- The partners and wider community are satisfied with the processes and outcomes of joint management.
- Effective governance and continuous improvement.

### Management Directions

**40. Committee Meetings** – The GJMC will meet at least twice each year to: plan and develop policy for the management of the Park, evaluate joint management, monitor management progress, and discuss any other business. Decisions will be made where possible by consensus, not by majority vote.

**41. Making Decisions** – The partners will share decision-making (Table 2). Working groups of Traditional Owners may be formed to progress specific projects or consider special issues or proposals in between committee meetings. The PWS will manage the Park on a day-to-day basis under the direction of the GJMC.

**42. Communication** – The PWS will ensure that Traditional Owners are kept well-informed about management activities and issues. GJMC members will be responsible for passing on information to other Traditional Owners. Opportunities will also be provided for Traditional Owners to exchange ideas and knowledge with other Aboriginal people engaged in joint management.

**43. Participation of Traditional Owners** – Opportunities for the paid participation of Traditional Owners in management programs will be maximised given resources available. These will be scheduled at committee meetings.



**44. Supporting and Building the Partnership** – The partners and NLC recognise that joint management will be a process of continuous learning and growth. Special support and training will be provided to the partners to grow their skills in cross-cultural communication and governance, with attention given to needs identified by the monitoring and evaluation program.

**45. Monitoring the Partnership** - The joint management partners will monitor management performance to ensure that learning and improvement are continuous. A monitoring and evaluation program will be put in place as a high priority, within the early years of the implementation of this plan, and information from this will inform actions to develop effective governance and cross-cultural management practices.

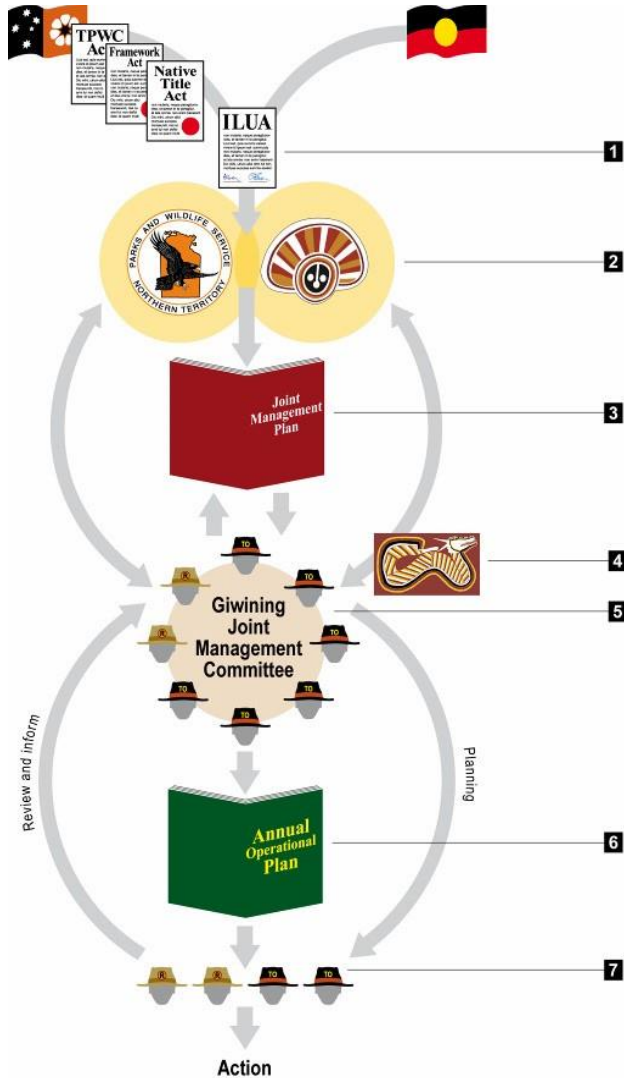
### Performance Measures

- A participatory monitoring and evaluation program between Wardaman and PWS is run annually
- Satisfaction of the joint management partners
- Effectiveness of the joint management partnership (including decision-making processes)
- Implementation of annually agreed priorities
- Achievements related to the longer-term aims stated in this plan relating to culture, country and visitors.



Senior Park Ranger Andrew Peckham talks about weed management at a Giwining / Flora River Country Camp.

**Figure 2. Joint Management, Decision Making and Planning**



1. Legislation – Joint Management is set up under Northern Territory Law. Under the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*, the Indigenous Land Use Agreement provides for joint management of the Park.
2. Joint Management Partners – The Northern Territory PWS and the Traditional Owners of Giwining / Flora River Nature Park.
3. Joint Management Plan – An agreement between the joint management partners about managing the Park together. This Plan will stay in effect until replaced by a new plan.
4. Northern Land Council – The Council assists and represents the interests of Traditional Owners.
5. Giwining Joint Management Committee – The GJMC will meet at least twice each year to: consider and ratify the Park’s annual budget and operational plan, evaluate joint management, monitor progress against the operational plan, and discuss other business as appropriate. Decisions will be made by consensus, not by majority vote. The NLC will generally assist the running of committee meetings.
6. Annual Operational Plans – The Giwining Joint Management Committee reviews and approves operational plans annually, consistent with directions in the Joint Management Plan.
7. Day-to-Day Work – Traditional Owners and Park Rangers work together to carry out agreed management programs and priority tasks, as set out in the annual operational plan.

**Table 3.** Decision making framework

Giwining Joint Management Committee	Operational Staff
Role	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise executive authority and be accountable for the management of the Park.</li> <li>• Set direction for park management programs, using the Joint Management Plan as a guide.</li> <li>• Approve annual budgets.</li> <li>• Set policy and procedural directions.</li> <li>• Approve commercial and development proposals in line with approved guidelines.</li> <li>• Monitor, evaluate and report on management performance.</li> <li>• Engage at a senior level with other interested stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage Park on a day-to-day basis.</li> <li>• Implement programs, policy and procedure as approved by the Committee.</li> <li>• Maximise on-ground participation of Traditional Owners in management of the Park.</li> </ul>
Types of decisions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve operational plans for Park management programs.</li> <li>• Delegate tasks to working / advisory groups as appropriate.</li> <li>• Consult with community stakeholders and wider group of Traditional Owners as appropriate.</li> <li>• Consider other proposals or issues not otherwise specified in this plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement routine activities and programs in line with approved Joint Management Plan and associated policy and procedures.</li> <li>• Issue permits according to policy and procedure.</li> <li>• Develop and implement operational plans and allocate annual budget in consultation with Traditional Owners for approval of the Park Management Committee.</li> </ul>

## Business Operations

Engaging Traditional Owners in park related work for economic and social benefit is a key to true joint management. For Traditional Owners, joint management is an opportunity to participate in management, commercial tourism and park service provision. They recognise that long-term institutional support and capacity building will be needed for these goals to be achieved. Bridging the gap between their aspirations and their capacity will require training, employment and enterprise development. Other business operations themes include operational planning, administration of special activities requiring permits, stakeholder engagement and research and monitoring activities.

The joint management partners of the Park believe that:

- Effective management means that available resources are used efficiently to achieve tasks in agreed priority order.
- Successful management will be achieved by competent, well-trained staff.
- Training and employment opportunities for local Aboriginal people are a key priority.

- Park management benefits from involving stakeholders and the public.
- The public image of the Park needs to be consistent with the Park's vision and values.
- Research and monitoring of natural and cultural values make for better informed management decisions.

## **Effective Operations**

The management requirements of Giwining / Flora River Nature Park are relatively simple. Although visitor numbers may rise during the term of this Plan, it is expected they will remain low. Environmental programs require a moderate level of investment. The Park has no resident staff and is managed from the PWS operational base in Katherine. The Park is closed at the onset of the wet season for visitor safety, to protect roads from damage, and to protect Park values. A small fenced off maintenance compound is located on Park. Park Rangers mainly visit the Park during the cooler months when visitor activity is highest.

The majority of funding to manage or develop this Park is provided by the Northern Territory Government (NTG), allocated as a share of funds to manage this and all other parks and reserves within the NTG parks estate. The NLC also makes contributions to joint management activities. Capital works programs are subject to whole of government and Departmental priorities.

Effective use of limited resources hinges on integrated operational planning. All Operational Plans are developed and reviewed annually by the joint management partners, with priority actions identified against available management resources. Operational Plans include visitors, weeds, fire and feral animals, as well as research and monitoring. Annual fire, weed and feral animal plans are based on long-term strategies of five years or more. Co-ordination and integration into a prioritised, annual Operational Plan, based on protection of core values, is essential to maximising resource use and efficiency.

## **Indigenous Training, Employment and Enterprise Development**

The Traditional Owners want employment for their families and joint management should provide them with at least some such benefit. Although park-based work and training will not meet their broader employment aspirations, joint management is a significant opportunity, especially for their young people to develop the skills and confidence for them to enter the work force.

While direct employment as Park Rangers is important to both partners, financial constraints mean that only a small number are able to benefit from these arrangements.

Flexible work programs are a chance for a larger number of Traditional Owners and their families to work on Park management projects with the PWS, sharing skills and receiving training. To date Wardaman People have been employed to assist with a range of everyday park management activities such as fire, weed and crocodile control. They have also worked on projects such as flora and fauna surveys, fence construction and maintenance, sign installation, campground maintenance, boat ramp repair, harvest of plant materials and provision of cultural information.

From time to time the PWS also lets contracts for works and services relating to the Park. Joint management agreements allow for favour to be given to Aboriginal organisations or businesses that employ Aboriginal people. In time, it is hoped that a significant amount of work relating to the Park's management will be partially or fully contracted to Aboriginal businesses, in accordance with contract laws and policies in force in the Northern Territory. A number of contracts have been awarded to the Wardaman Aboriginal

Corporation based in Katherine.

Tourism ventures are another way that Traditional Owners may benefit economically from the Park. Some Traditional Owners have expressed interest in selling arts and crafts on the Park. Others are interested in running commercial tours. As visitation to the Park is low and seasonal, any financial returns from the Park are likely to be small, and therefore the availability of business support and partnerships should be considered if developing such Aboriginal enterprises.

*“We might run an ecotourism operation, such as boat cruises, where we show visitors different trees and talk about bush medicine.”*

## Special Activities and Development

Commercial enterprises, or any activities involving special access or use of any part of the Park, require a permit issued under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. Such activities include: research, public gatherings and events, commercial tourism, aircraft operation, and commercial filming and photography. Permits are issued with conditions which permit holders must abide by to ensure safety standards and minimise negative impacts on the values of the Park and on other Park users. Additionally, where a secure form of land tenure is needed for the occupation or specific use of an area, for example, by a tourism enterprise, the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* provides for a licence or lease to be negotiated.

The GJMC will need to ensure that permit proposals can be efficiently and effectively processed, having regard to the interests of the Park and the joint management partnership, stakeholders and the wider community, and existing PWS policy and procedures. Only one commercial tour company has operated in the Park, conducting infrequent guided canoe tours on the river. Tour companies visiting Northern Territory parks require a permit under the PWS Tour Operator Permit System.

Development proposals on parks and reserves are subject to assessment that ensures that natural, cultural and historical values are not affected. Larger developments may be subject to the *Environmental Assessment Act* and the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*.

Protection for places of cultural significance in the NT is afforded through overlapping legislation. The Commonwealth *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (NT) (ALRA)* gives legal recognition to areas which that Act terms as “sacred sites” and defines as:

A site that is sacred to Aboriginals or is otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal tradition, and includes any land that, under a law of the Northern Territory, is declared to be sacred to Aboriginals or of significance according to Aboriginal tradition. The ALRA makes it an offence to enter or remain on land that is a sacred site.

Complementary Northern Territory legislation, the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* also provides protection for all sites that fall within the scope of this definition. This protection is generally provided in the form of an Authority Certificate from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) in response to land use proposals. It means that Traditional Owners have an enforceable right to say who enters their sacred sites, and what cannot happen on their sacred sites. Illegal entry, work on, and use of a sacred site are all offences.

Strong joint management will ensure that sacred sites are protected according to Traditional Owners’ wishes. Under the ALRA the NLC has a specific function to “assist Aboriginals in the taking of measures likely to assist in the protection of sacred sites” and, under its established procedures, will carry out this role in facilitating joint management.

The *Heritage Conservation Act* provides for the protection and conservation of



archaeological places and objects. Any work, including conservation, on these requires consent from the Minister, or Minister's delegate.

## **Mining**

Mining and extractive activities may have significant adverse impacts on the natural and cultural values of the Park. There are no current mining or exploration licences covering the Park. The Park's small area means that the impact of any mining activity is likely to be significant. The Traditional Owners have expressed opposition to any form of exploration or mining activity in the Park. Before granting a mining or petroleum interest in a park, the Northern Territory Minister for Mines is required to consult the partners through the Minister for the Parks and Wildlife Service. A Reservation from Occupation may be sought over all or part of the Park to exclude mineral exploration or extraction.

## **The Park's Public Profile**

The joint management partners want the Park to have a positive public profile. Media coverage and other forms of promotion can help build public support for the Park with flow-on benefits to the partners and the Territory. Accurate promotion and marketing of the Park gives visitors appropriate expectations. It also influences visitor numbers, behaviour and satisfaction.

The Park has a low public profile, as evidenced by its small number of visitors. Larger parks in the region, such as Gregory National Park and Nitmiluk National Park, will maintain a higher profile and much higher visitor numbers than Flora River National Park. The Park is situated on the Savannah Way tourist route, which runs from Cairns to Broome via the Victoria Highway.

Departmental Commercial Film and Photography policy and locally developed guidelines will ensure the Park is promoted properly without compromising the Park values.

The Traditional Owners are proud of their cultural connections to the Park and their formal status as joint management partners. They wish to change the name of the Park to Giwining to reflect this. PWS policy supports proposals of this nature.

## **Relations with Community and Neighbours**

Park neighbours and the wider community have been involved in the management of the Park for many years. This will not change under joint management. The Park is a public asset and the partners are jointly accountable to the community.

Land management activities such as control of fire, weeds, cattle and feral animals can be more effective if neighbours and other stakeholders are involved. The Park's immediate neighbours are Scott Creek and Aroona Stations, the Djarrung Aboriginal Land Corporation and the Yubulyawun Aboriginal Land Trust. Stakeholders from the Katherine region include the Wardaman Aboriginal Corporation and the Victoria River District Conservation Association.

The wider community, and tourism and conservation groups such as Tourism NT, Tourism Top End and Greening Australia, have interests in the Park. From time to time, these and other agencies may have reason to access the Park, seek information or give management advice.

## **Research and Monitoring**

Most Park research and monitoring programs are carried out as internal projects by the PWS or its Department. External projects are encouraged, particularly targeted research which might improve management, and where any impact on the Park's values is

minimal. Activities associated with research, such as interfering with wildlife and taking, interfering or keeping protected wildlife requires a permit issued under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. Local research guidelines are required to assist the permit approvals process. Traditional Owners' wealth of knowledge about the Park may contribute to research projects. It is important for them to be consulted and invited to participate in research and monitoring projects and, where possible, employed in related work.

Monitoring visitor numbers, demographics, behaviour and satisfaction helps to guide visitor management, including planning and design of facilities. This data can also be useful to inform Traditional Owners interested in developing tourism enterprises.

The success of both joint management and park management will be measured against the performance measures contained within this Plan. Each year during GJMC meetings, achievement against the aims of this Plan will be considered. Progress with management directions, performance measures and overall direction will be assessed. This assessment will determine whether the Plan requires revision or should continue in operation for the intended ten-year period. Implementation of the annual joint management participatory monitoring and evaluation program will ensure joint management at Giwining / Flora River Nature Park continues to be assessed and improved into the future.

## **Living on the Park**

Joint management agreements provide for Traditional Owners to live on and near parks so they might actively contribute to natural and cultural resource management. Many of the Flora River Traditional Owners live on communities either adjacent to, or very close to, the Park. The joint management partners have agreed therefore that living area proposals will not be considered for Giwining / Flora River Nature Park during the period of this Plan.

## **Consolidating and Extending the Park**

The Park is relatively small and a poor shape for an "island" conservation reserve, as it has a long boundary relative to the enclosed area. Opportunities to enhance the Park's conservation viability by expanding the Park, or by entering into agreements covering landscape-scale conservation with neighbouring and other land holders in the region, are being explored. Giwining / Flora River Nature Park is well placed to provide a significant contribution to the NTG Ecolink initiative. The Traditional Owners of NT Portion 4058, the Yubulyawun Aboriginal Land Trust, are keen to have this managed in conjunction with Giwining / Flora River Nature Park. This would provide an invaluable link to NT Portion 4200 creating an uninterrupted corridor linking Wagiman and Wardaman land down to the Daly River mouth. The GJMC will initially consider any proposal for an expansion of the Park, prior to consulting thoroughly with adjoining landholders. NT Portion 3938 is managed as part of the Park and the partners would like this portion to be formally declared part of the Park.

### **Aims**

- Traditional Owners benefiting economically from the Park.
- The public profile of the Park is accurate, appropriate and consistent with the values and purpose of the Park.
- A supportive community and productive relations with others who have an interest in the Park's management.



## Management Directions

**46. Operational Planning** - The GJMC will endorse annual prioritised operational plans which focus on key values of the Park and risks or threats to these values. Operational Planning will pay particular attention to:

- The vision, principles, core values, aims and directions contained in this Joint Management Plan.
- Incorporating Indigenous knowledge and priorities into park management programs.
- Regional priorities, available resources and external funding options.
- Maximising Traditional Owner participation in programs.
- Integrating Operational Plans.

**47. Employment, Training and Enterprise Development** – Training, employment and business outcomes for Traditional Owners will be actively pursued. Opportunities for direct and flexible employment, contracts and enterprise development will be reviewed annually, together with Traditional Owners' interests and capacity. Agreed, achievable plans will be developed. The PWS will ensure that where it cannot directly assist, that training and business development are coordinated with other agencies.

- Paid Participation – Opportunities for paid participation of Traditional Owners in Park management programs will be maximised. This may include on-the-job training as well as accredited activities carried out by training organisations.
- Contract Services – Contract services relating to the Park will be procured with respect to NT government processes and principles. Traditional Owners and Aboriginal organisations they support will be the preferred contract service providers where capacity to fulfil contract standards is demonstrated. Preference will also be given to contractors who provide training and employment to local Aboriginal people.
- Cultural Advice – Traditional Owners will be paid for specialist cultural advice and supervision when required.
- Indigenous Employment Opportunities in the PWS – The PWS will continue to provide opportunities for direct employment and training for Aboriginal people. Where appropriate aptitude and competency is demonstrated, preference will be given to people with local affiliations.
- Community-based Indigenous Rangers and Special Interest Groups – Local Indigenous community-based Rangers, community volunteers, and sponsored training and employment organisations will be encouraged and, where possible, invited to assist with Park management.
- Other Aboriginal Rangers Working on the Park – Aboriginal Rangers from other areas will be introduced to the GJMC or delegated Traditional Owners before working at the Park.

**48. Permits and Development Proposals** - The joint management partners will establish guidelines and procedures by which proposals requiring permits under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws* will be considered.

- Routine Commercial Tours – Permits for tour businesses making normal use of the Park will be issued through the Tour Operator Permit System. Information from this system will be used for the better management of the Park, including improved communication with operators.
- Pending development of agreed guidelines and procedures, PWS will consult with Traditional Owners (with the assistance of the NLC) in relation to permit applications that request any access or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors to the Park.
- Concession Permits – Concession permits will be issued by the PWS with approval of the GJMC.
- Sacred Sites Clearance – The NLC will have primary responsibility for sacred sites clearances for proposed works on the Park. However, should the joint management partners agree in consultation with the NLC, a proponent for work within the Park may apply for an Authority Certificate under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*.

- Cultural Sites Protection – Proposals for work affecting archaeological sites or objects will be consistent with the requirements of the *Heritage Conservation Act*. Expert advice will be sought from the relevant NT government authority. Sacred sites clearance process will also apply to works that may impact archaeological sites.

**49. Mining and Exploration** – The joint management partners will seek to establish a mining reserve (Reservation from Occupation) over the entire Park.

**50. Promotion** – The joint management partners will work with Tourism NT, Tourism Top End, and other relevant organisations to ensure that pre-visit information and promotion of the Park is accurate, reinforces the Park's values and presents the Park in ways that are acceptable to the Traditional Owners. The Traditional Owners are proud of their cultural connections to the Park and their formal status as joint management partners. The PWS will work with Traditional Owners to have the Park's name formally changed to Giwining.

**51. Community Involvement** – Community involvement initiatives that assist in achieving this Plan's aims will be actively supported. The partners will keep the community and stakeholders informed about significant issues and proposed developments.

**52. Stakeholder Liaison** – The partners will be proactive in liaising with the tourism industry through established forums and organisations such as Tourism NT and Tourism Top End. The partners will liaise with neighbours and, when appropriate, work together on matters of mutual interest such as fire prevention and control, stock and feral animal control, weed control and tourism development.

**53. Internal Research and Monitoring** – Programs will be designed and approved in accordance with the Parks and Wildlife Service Division Research Plan. Monitoring of visitor numbers will be carried out at a frequency to be determined by the partners and the PWS Tourism Visitor Services Unit. Visitor monitoring reports will be provided to the GJMC to assist in planning and decision making.

- Traditional Owner Participation – Participation by Traditional Owners and their employment in research and monitoring projects will be maximised. Aboriginal knowledge will be incorporated in project objectives and outcomes where appropriate.

**54. Protecting Intellectual Property** – The intellectual property rights of Traditional Owners will be protected through the Departmental Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property policy. The recording, storage and use of cultural information will be consistent with the directions of Traditional Owners through the GJMC and with overarching policy agreed between the NLC and PWS.

**55. Living and Camping on the Park** – The Traditional Owner group has said they do not want permanent living area proposals considered during the term of this Plan. The Yarrayan campground will be available to Traditional Owners for their use for cultural purposes according to standards agreed with the PWS.

**56. Consolidating the Park** – The joint management partners will seek to declare NT Portion 3938 as part of the Park under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. The PWS will continue to explore options for conservation partnerships with landholders in the region to improve the conservation viability of the park and conservation outcomes across the broader landscape.

### **Performance Measures**

- Opportunities to engage Traditional Owners (training, employment and enterprise development) actively pursued.

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## Appendix 2. Wardaman Seasonal Calendar

### Yijilg - wet season December to February

This is the wet season when rain falls daily, often in large amounts. Often travel is restricted due to flooding and the boggy nature of heavy soils on black soil plains.

Fruits available in this season include Bungen (*Ficus platypoda* and *F. leucotricha*), Buda (*Vitex glabrata*) and Julamarran (*Flueggea virosa*). In the past, Wolon (*Heteropogon contortus*) grass was used to make a covering for bush houses that were constructed in Yijilg to provide protection from rain.

Towards the end of Yijilg and into Wulujujun, when the Berndeny (*Heteropogon triticeus*) or "Bush sugar cane" is succulent and juicy, the stems are chewed and sucked to obtain the sweet liquid inside. The stems are broken into short lengths so that they may be carried easily.

Yidawurru (*Citrullus lanatus*) or watermelon are often found growing along roadsides during this season and are much sought after for their fruit.

The Bawujin (*Brachystelma glabriflorum*) or bush potato is best dug up in the Yijilg season when they are fat and juicy after the rains. The small disc shaped tubers or yams are dug up, washed and eaten. They are especially favoured by children. The dark flowers, Ngayal, hang downwards off the stem and point to areas where more yams may be found.

### Wulujujun - end of the wet season February to March

This season sees the last of the rains and the end of the wet season.

Fruit available include Magorigori (*Ampelocissus acetosa* and *A. frutescens*), Yiwung (*Antidesma ghesaembilla*), Mlyarlunguj (*Antidesma parvifolia*), Julamarran (*Flueggea virosa*), Menyjeng (*Terminalia erythrocarpa*) and Mordon (*Vigna lanceolata*, *V. vexillata*). The yams of Magulu (*Dioscorea bulbifera*) and Megerrman/Gawkawili (*Dioscorea transversa*) and Gayalarrin (*Typhonium liliifolium*) are also available.

The Gayalarrin tuber is washed repeatedly, before being smashed on a stone and cooked on hot ashes. The process is then repeated again before eating. The leaves are only visible in the Wulujujun season but the tuber is available all year round. This plant can be found on black soil country or Bern-gijin.

The ripe fruit of the Yiwung are dark blue to black and are a highly regarded food resource. They are produced at the end of this season. Various birds and fruit bats also eat the fruit. Harlequin bugs are often found on this species.

The fruit of the Magorigori are eaten when black and ripe. They are sweet to taste but leave a sour aftertaste. When the fruits are ripe, blue tongue lizards - Burarriman and Yarringa, are fat and ready to catch and eat.

### Wujerrijin - dry season April to September

This is the dry season when the weather is cold and no rain falls. The skies are generally clear of clouds. Jegban (bush turkey), Gangman (kangaroo) and Walanja (goanna) will be properly fat and good to eat. Waterlily seed - Gardi (*Nymphaea macrosperma*, *N. violacea*) are now ready for collection to eat raw or make into damper.

Fruits available in this season include Lerrwewen (*Ficus opposita*), Merdengdeng (*Ficus scobina*), Jamagarra (*Nauclea orientalis*), Buda (*Vitex glabrata*), Manamurran (*Grewia retusifolia*), Mardulg (*Cucumis melo*, small leaf), Ngarlwog (*Cucumis melo*, large leaf), Mardarrgu (*Ziziphus quadrilocularis*) and Julamarran (*Briedelia tomentosa*). The seeds of

Bardigi (*Terminalia arostrata*) and the tubers of Ginyuwurru (*Cyperus bulbosus*) are also available to be eaten.

The fruit of the Ngarlwog is eaten when ripe and pale green to yellow in colour. The hairs should be washed or rubbed off the skin of the fruit before eating as they can irritate the lips and tongue. The fruit of the Mardulg is also eaten when the fruit is ripe, pale green to yellow. As for Ngarlwog, the fruit needs to be prepared before eating to avoid irritation. Bitter fruits can be cooked or softened in hot sand that has been heated under a fire.

The fruit of the Buda are eaten when they are black and ripe. They are sweet and very pleasant tasting. The fruits can be dried, mixed with red ochre and stored wrapped in a paperbark envelope for later use. Fruit are available at the end of the Wujerriin or early Yijilg seasons. The rain bird, Juwogban, calls out when it is time to collect the fruit and eat them. Dry, straight branches and stems are used as firesticks – Jinggiyn - to light fires.

The small tubers of the Ginyuwurru are dug up and may be eaten raw or after cooking in hot coals and ashes. The tubers are collected in Wujerriin season when they are properly formed after the wet.

In this season, the fruit of the Bardigi are cracked open between stones and the seed inside is taken out and eaten. The bark of the Bardigi is used as medicine for scabies and measles. It is boiled in water and the liquid is used as a wash. The bark can be boiled in water and used as a dye.

### **Ngurruwun - hot weather time September to December**

This is the hot weather time when the ground becomes very hot to walk on. The first rains begin but they are inconsistent. It is also the time of flowering for many plants including Binin and Dangirndi (*Melaleuca* spp.), Bardigi (*Terminalia grandiflora*), Galarwarriny (*Eucalyptus confertiflora*) and Yiwung (*Antidesma ghesaembilla*).

Fruits available in this season include Gulid (*Buchanania obovata*), Mirdiwan (*Ficus racemosa*) and Belwern (*Syzygium eucalyptoides* and *S. forte*). Jen-gen (*Brachychiton megaphyllus*) starts to flower to indicate the beginning of this season.

The appearance of March flies in September or October indicates the end of the dry season and beginning of the buildup. When they start biting it also indicates that Freshwater Crocodiles are laying their eggs.

The ripe pale pink fruit of the Belwern (pink apple) are ready for eating. The fruit can be collected by scooping them off the top of the water as they float along with the current. The fruit of the Belwern (white apple) are also ready for eating. The papery bark of this species can be used to cover the top of ground ovens before covering the oven further with earth ready for cooking. Both apple species also grow in the river country - Yirrgulun.

The fruit of the Gulid are eaten when ripe and green but soft to touch. The fruit has high Vitamin C levels. Flowers are produced during the hot, dry period, the same time that mango trees flower. The fruits are also eaten by kangaroos and wallabies - Gangman, and some birds – Jigjig such as parrots and friar birds. The fruit is available when the early rains are falling, the same time that mango fruit are produced. Often the fruit are collected from the ground.

The swollen tap root of the young Gulid plants may be eaten raw or roasted. The leaves and bark may be boiled in water and the liquid used as a washing medicine to treat skin sores and scabies. The young roots of this plant are used to treat toothache. The roots are heated on the fire and then held against the painful tooth to relieve pain.

## Appendix 3. Priority Management Actions

The management actions from this management plan have been collated and prioritised below for easy reference.

Management Action	Priority
<b>Zoning Scheme</b>	
1. Conform to the zoning scheme in managing the Park (Table 3, Map 3). Development in any zone is subject to normal approval processes to ensure appropriate protection of cultural and environmental values. Special activities are always subject to normal by-laws and permits (refer to MD <sup>1</sup> 1).	Ongoing
<b>Natural Values</b>	
2. Protecting people, personal property and infrastructure from fire (highest priority) (refer Management Direction (MD 13)).	High
3. The natural character of the Park will be protected. Any development will be carefully sited and designed to be in harmony with the natural environment and significant sites, so as not to detract from the Park's landscape and scenic values (MD 2).	High
4. Design all developments on Park to avoid compromising water quality and local surface hydrology. In particular, design toilet systems to minimise risk of water contamination.	Ongoing
5. Controlling Bellyache Bush, Grader Grass and Mission Grass as per the statutory Management Plan(s) or advice from Weeds Management Branch (MD 11).	High
6. Protect the riverine corridor and riparian forests from hot wildfires through active management in the early dry season (MD 13).	High
7. Reducing fuel and / or maintaining firebreaks on boundary areas to prevent wildfires from entering or exiting the Park and limiting the area of the Park burnt (MD 13).	High
8. Training requirements and competency standards for PWS staff, participating Traditional Owners and volunteers	Ongoing
9. Maintaining data that will inform sound fire management decision-making and help in understanding fire-habitat relationships	Ongoing
10. Complete the boundary fencing of the entire Park and install a cattle grid at the park entrance. Maintain boundary fences to a high, stock-proof standard (MD 12).	Moderate
11. Continue to monitor for pigs, particularly in sensitive riparian areas, and remove at the earliest opportunity (MD 12).	Moderate
12. Continue to monitor the Park for cattle and work closely with neighbours to keep cattle out of the Park and their timely removal (MD 12).	Moderate
13. Protecting vulnerable cultural sites from fire damage (MD 13).	Moderate
14. Eradicating Parkinsonia and Noogoorra Burr, given they currently occur in isolated, small areas and can be opportunistically targeted (MD 11).	Moderate
15. Regulate the use of watercraft in the river to protect natural and cultural values, to prevent soil erosion and water pollution, and to promote visitor safety and enjoyment (MD 7).	Moderate

<sup>1</sup> Management Direction

Management Action	Priority
16. Monitor annually for Black Rats at the campground(s) and remove when found (MD 12).	Moderate
17. Record observations of Purple-crowned Fairy Wren and Freshwater Sawfish into the NTG Fauna Database (MD 8).	Moderate
18. Periodically assess the condition, including status, of species such as <i>Livistona mariae</i> ssp. <i>rigida</i> (Garbany) and <i>Casuarina cunninghamiana</i> (Lalmarrin) (MD 8).	Moderate
19. Results of the annual Pig-nosed Turtle survey will be recorded into the NTG Fauna Database, to indicate the trend in population size over time (MD 8).	Moderate
20. Opportunistically monitor tufa formations to ensure they remain intact. If damage is noted then determine cause of impact and take action when damage is sustained through preventable actions (MD 4).	Moderate
21. Any new weed incursion(s) will be assessed against legislative and statutory requirements, regional priorities and the current Park priority list before any action is taken, or changes made to the current priorities (MD 11).	Ongoing
22. Traditional Owners will exercise their rights to harvest some animals and plants as bush tucker but will continue to forgo their right to use firearms when hunting on the Park. The impact of this traditional harvest will be managed if necessary to ensure sustainable populations (MD 9).	Ongoing
23. Work together as part of a cooperative group of land managers within the catchment and the larger Daly River catchment to protect ground and surface water. Park managers will regularly liaise and cooperate with groups set up to address conservation issues at the catchment level (e.g. Daly River Management Advisory Committee (MD 6).	Ongoing
24. Collection from within the Park is prohibited to preserve important habitat (MD 10).	Ongoing
25. Minimise disturbance to the Park's soils. Rehabilitate any areas severely impacted by feral animals or human activity, with priority given to the riverine corridor. Site infrastructure and facilities to avoid areas susceptible to erosion and minimise soil disturbance during any construction. Seek expert advice prior to development and for rehabilitation. Erect signs advising visitors to keep off rehabilitation sites and to keep to designated tracks (MD 3).	Low
26. Restricting open campfires to designated fireplaces in the Visitor Zone. In other zones, campfires may be permitted subject to conditions that minimise the impact and risk of wildfire (MD 13).	Ongoing
27. Involving the Park's neighbours and considering their interests (MD 13).	Ongoing
<b>Cultural Values</b>	
28. Traditional Owners' authority on cultural matters will be respected. Senior Traditional Owners may supervise access and advise on appropriate behaviour if PWS staff are required to access culturally sensitive areas. Parts of the Park may occasionally be closed for short periods to allow Traditional Owners to conduct ceremony. Adequate public notice will be given by PWS regarding any such closure (MD 15).	High
29. For sacred site clearance processes see Special Activities and Development section (page 35). Access restrictions will apply for special protection zone sites (MD 16): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered Site 5268-22, Marrilinba – access to the island is allowed only to Aboriginal men. Canoes must pass to the west of the rock;</li> <li>• Registered Site 5268-24, Kulpinji – access to the island is allowed only to Aboriginal women. Fishing from the riverbank is allowed;</li> <li>• Registered Site 5268-7, Yinggawuyma – access restricted. Boats must keep away from the 'boiling' water; and</li> <li>• Unregistered Site 5258-8, Yibulbulkabaya – access restricted.</li> </ul>	High



Management Action	Priority
30. Traditional and legal rights to hunt and gather will be respected. Rights to harvest plant materials from the Park for traditional purposes will extend only to Traditional Owners. Gathering of plant foods and materials by others will require the approval of the Giwining Joint Management Committee (GJMC) and normal approval processes. The GJMC will review harvesting practices from time to time to ensure that use in the Park is sustainable and that visitors' experiences are not significantly affected. Traditional Owners will continue to forgo the use of firearms when hunting in the Park (MD18).	Ongoing
31. Support Traditional Owners' rights and obligations to visit and use country to maintain cultural traditions. The Yarrayan Campground may be used as a base for their visits. Joint management programs will allow for Traditional Owners to fulfil customary obligations. Pursue other supporting resources as required (MD 14).	Ongoing
32. The joint management partners will develop a cultural program and associated guidelines for the Park which will be regularly reviewed. They will provide for Traditional Owners' interests, including time on country, recording and monitoring places or objects of cultural significance, and recording and transferring Aboriginal knowledge as appropriate (MD 19).	Moderate
33. Indigenous ecological knowledge and skills will be integrated into park management programs where possible and recorded appropriately (MD 20).	Moderate
34. The intellectual property rights of Traditional Owners will be protected through the Departmental Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property policy. The recording, storage and use of cultural information will be consistent with the directions of Traditional Owners through the GJMC and with overarching policy agreed between the NLC and PWS (MD 21).	Ongoing
<b>Visitor Values</b>	
35. Continue to implement the Katherine River Saltwater Crocodile Management Strategy and the Estuarine Crocodile Management for Visitor Safety - Plan for Giwining / Flora River Nature Park to reduce the potential for harm to visitors (MD 31).	High
36. Swimming in the Flora River in the Park will be prohibited to reduce the risk of crocodile attack (MD 35).	High
37. Continue to assess the risks from the Park's facilities and visitor management practices. Any identified risks will be rectified on a priority basis (MD 36).	High
38. Review and update the emergency response plan for the Park annually before each visitor season. Train all staff appropriately and report emergency incidents and accidents to the Giwining Joint Management Committee (MD 37).	High
39. To avoid accidental capture of turtles, use of lures only (no bait) will be permitted in the Park. Northern Territory bag limits will apply (MD 28).	High
40. Visitor access, activities and facilities within the Park will be managed and developed according to the Zoning scheme (Table 2, Map 3). Future development will be consistent with a low-key, tranquil visitor experience and protection of Park values (MD 22).	High
41. When considering applications for Park concession operations, the partners will give preference to tour operators who are Traditional Owners (MD 25).	High
42. Access to the Park, or to areas within the Park, may be restricted for environmental, cultural or safety reasons (MD 29).	Ongoing

Management Action	Priority
<p>43. Canoeing on the river will only be permitted with appropriately licensed tour operators. For safety and to protect Park values the following restrictions will be placed on boats and canoes (MD 26):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powered vessels are confined to the central, 5km section of river, as indicated in Map 3;</li> <li>• Powered vessels may have a maximum power output of 15horsepower, are restricted to a speed of 5 knots and must be no longer than 3.6 metres;</li> <li>• Watercraft will not be permitted upstream of Djarrung Falls or downstream of the last canoe portage (as per Map 3);</li> <li>• Canoeists on tours will be required to use portages provided and take care not to damage the tufa formations;</li> <li>• Visitors must not access islands within the river system. Watercraft must travel on the west and northwest sides of the islands and keep away from the whirlpool upstream of Djarrung Falls; and</li> <li>• Boats must be launched at the boat ramp. Canoes must be launched at either the boat ramp or Yarrayan day-use area.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
44. Generators may not be used on the Park without a PWS permit (MD 32).	Ongoing
45. Pets will not be allowed in the Park without a PWS permit (MD 33).	Ongoing
46. The collection of firewood on the Park will be prohibited (MD 34).	Ongoing
47. The effect of wash from outboard motors on the banks of the Flora River will be monitored, and control measures (such as limiting boat numbers) introduced if necessary. Visitors and tour operators will be encouraged to use electric motors to limit pollution. Activities which have the potential to pollute waterways in the Park will not be permitted (MD 27).	Moderate
<p>48. Giwining Joint Management Committee are to regularly review all available visitor information and update as required, subject to resources (MD 30):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erect additional signs where appropriate to warn visitors of hazards, install regulatory information and pictograms and provide further cultural and joint management information;</li> <li>• Use Wardaman words and language in visitor information to enhance cultural appreciation; and</li> <li>• Check all shared cultural information for accuracy and ensure it is approved by the appropriate Aboriginal people (as identified by the NLC) and consistent with policy to protect Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP – see page 22).</li> </ul>	Moderate
49. Visitors will be encouraged to keep to vehicle and walking tracks to minimise damage to sensitive environments and avoid risk of accidental entry into culturally sensitive areas (MD 24).	Moderate
50. Djarrung campground will be the main public camping facility. The Yarrayan joint management campground may be developed for public use if Park visitation increases significantly. Options to contract campground services will be considered, with Aboriginal businesses or organisations employing Traditional Owners being awarded preference in accordance with joint management agreements (MD 23).	Ongoing
<b>Governance</b>	
51. The GJMC will meet at least twice each year to: plan and develop policy for the management of the Park, evaluate joint management, monitor management progress, and discuss any other business. Decisions will be made where possible by consensus, not by majority vote (MD 38).	High

Management Action	Priority
52. The partners and NLC recognise that joint management will be a process of continuous learning and growth. Special support and training will be provided to the partners to grow their skills in cross-cultural communication and governance, with attention given to needs identified by the monitoring and evaluation program (MD 42).	High
53. The joint management partners will monitor management performance to ensure that learning and improvement are continuous. A monitoring and evaluation program will be put in place as a high priority, within the early years of the implementation of this plan, and information from this will inform actions to develop effective governance and cross-cultural management practices (MD 43).	High
54. The PWS will ensure that Traditional Owners are kept well-informed about management activities and issues. GJMC members will be responsible for passing on information to other Traditional Owners. Opportunities will also be provided for Traditional Owners to exchange ideas and knowledge with other Aboriginal people engaged in joint management (MD 40).	High
55. The partners will share decision-making (Table 2). Working groups of Traditional Owners may be formed to progress specific projects or consider special issues or proposals in between committee meetings. The PWS will manage the Park on a day-to-day basis under the direction of the GJMC (MD 39).	Ongoing
56. Opportunities for the paid participation of Traditional Owners in management programs will be maximised given resources available. These will be scheduled at committee meetings (MD 41).	Moderate
<b>Business Operations</b>	
57. Community involvement initiatives that assist in achieving this Plan's aims will be actively supported. The partners will keep the community and stakeholders informed about significant issues and proposed developments (MD 49).	High
58. Pending development of agreed guidelines and procedures, PWS will consult with Traditional Owners (with the assistance of the NLC) in relation to permit applications that request any access or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors to the Park (MD 46).	High
59. Paid Participation – Opportunities for paid participation of Traditional Owners in Park management programs will be maximised. This may include on-the-job training as well as accredited activities carried out by training organisations (MD 45).	High
60. Contract Services – Contract services relating to the Park will be procured with respect to NT government processes and principles. Traditional Owners and Aboriginal organisations they support will be the preferred contract service providers where capacity to fulfil contract standards is demonstrated. Preference will also be given to contractors who provide training and employment to local Aboriginal people (MD 45).	High
61. The GJMC will endorse annual prioritised operational plans which focus on key values of the Park and risks or threats to these values. Operational Planning will pay particular attention to (MD 44): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vision, principles, core values, aims and directions contained in this Joint Management Plan;</li> <li>• Incorporating Indigenous knowledge and priorities into park management programs;</li> <li>• Regional priorities, available resources and external funding options;</li> <li>• Maximising Traditional Owner participation in programs; and</li> <li>• Integrating Operational Plans.</li> </ul>	Ongoing

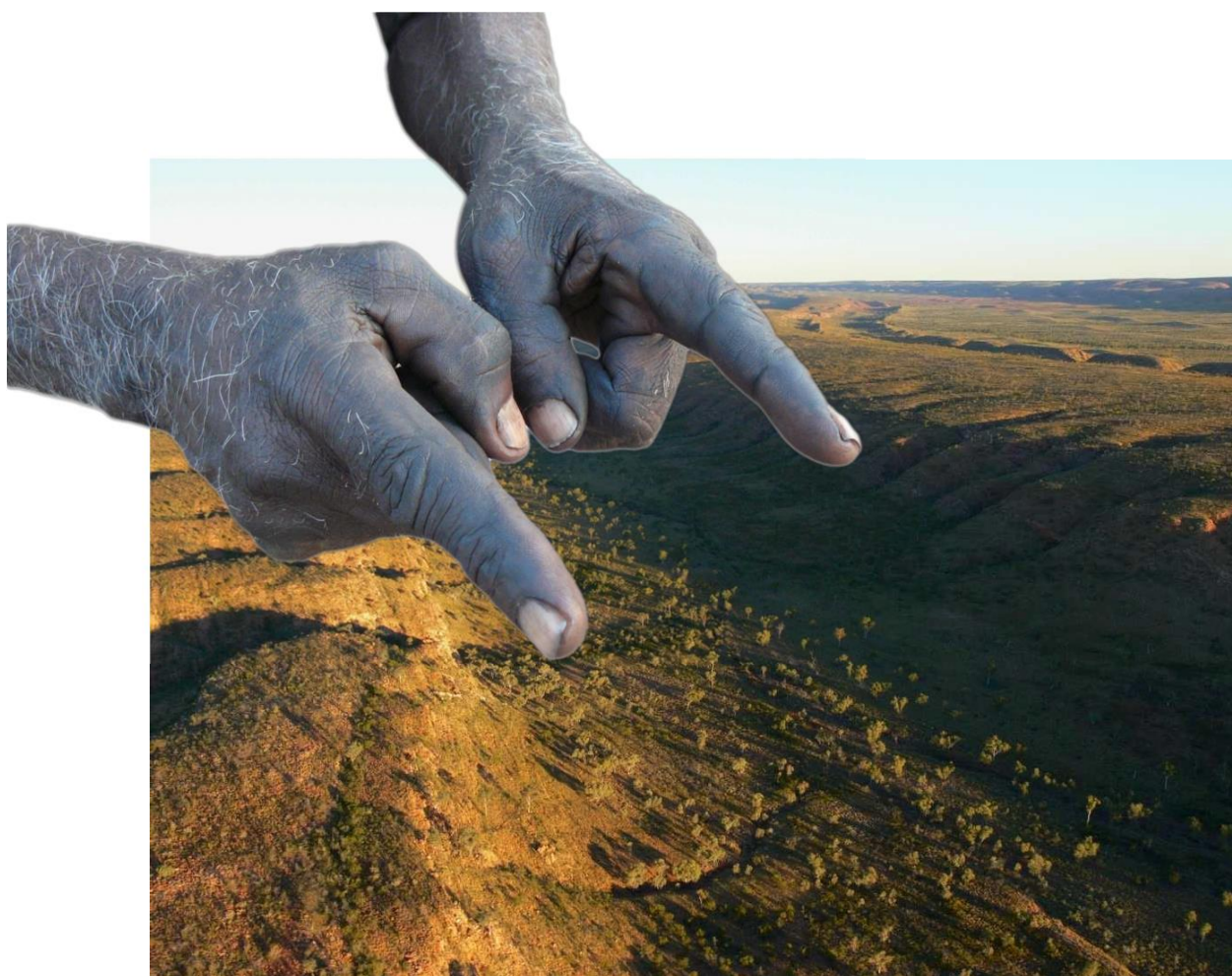
Management Action	Priority
62. The Traditional Owner group has said they do not want permanent living area proposals considered during the term of this Plan. The Yarrayan campground will be available to Traditional Owners for their use for cultural purposes according to standards agreed with the PWS (MD 53).	Ongoing
63. Indigenous Employment Opportunities in the PWS – The PWS will continue to provide opportunities for direct employment and training for Aboriginal people. Where appropriate aptitude and competency is demonstrated, preference will be given to people with local affiliations (MD 45).	Ongoing
64. Cultural Advice – Traditional Owners will be paid for specialist cultural advice and supervision when required (MD 45).	Ongoing
65. Sacred Sites Clearance – The NLC will have primary responsibility for sacred sites clearances for proposed works on the Park. However, should the joint management partners agree in consultation with the NLC, a proponent for work within the Park may apply for an Authority Certificate under the <i>Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act</i> (MD 46).	Ongoing
66. Cultural Sites Protection – Proposals for work affecting archaeological sites or objects will be consistent with the requirements of the <i>Heritage Conservation Act</i> . Expert advice will be sought from the relevant NT government authority. Sacred sites clearance process will also apply to works that may impact archaeological sites (MD 46).	Ongoing
67. Concession Permits – Concession permits will be issued by the PWS with approval of the GJMC (MD 46).	Ongoing
68. Routine Commercial Tours – Permits for tour businesses making normal use of the Park will be issued through the Tour Operator Permit System. Information from this system will be used for the better management of the Park, including improved communication with operators (MD 46).	Ongoing
69. The joint management partners will work with Tourism NT, Tourism Top End, and other relevant organisations to ensure that pre-visit information and promotion of the Park is accurate, reinforces the Park's values and presents the Park in ways that are acceptable to the Traditional Owners. The Traditional Owners are proud of their cultural connections to the Park and their formal status as joint management partners. The PWS will work with Traditional Owners to have the Park's name formally changed to Giwining (MD 48).	Ongoing
70. The partners will be proactive in liaising with the tourism industry through established forums and organisations such as Tourism NT and Tourism Top End. The partners will liaise with neighbours and, when appropriate, work together on matters of mutual interest such as fire prevention and control, stock and feral animal control, weed control and tourism development (MD 50).	Ongoing
71. The intellectual property rights of Traditional Owners will be protected through the Departmental Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property policy. The recording, storage and use of cultural information will be consistent with the directions of Traditional Owners through the GJMC and with overarching policy agreed between the NLC and PWS (MD 52).	Ongoing
72. Community-based Indigenous Rangers and Special Interest Groups – Local Indigenous community-based Rangers, community volunteers, and sponsored training and employment organisations will be encouraged and, where possible, invited to assist with Park management (MD 45).	Ongoing
73. Traditional Owner Participation – Participation by Traditional Owners and their employment in research and monitoring projects will be maximised. Aboriginal knowledge will be incorporated in project objectives and outcomes where appropriate (MD 51).	Moderate

<b>Management Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>
74. Other Aboriginal Rangers Working on the Park – Aboriginal Rangers from other areas will be introduced to the GJMC or delegated Traditional Owners before working at the Park (MD 45).	Moderate
75. The joint management partners will seek to declare NT Portion 3938 as part of the Park under the <i>Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act</i> . The PWS will continue to explore options for conservation partnerships with landholders in the region to improve the conservation viability of the park and conservation outcomes across the broader landscape (MD 54).	Moderate
76. The joint management partners will seek to establish a mining reserve (Reservation from Occupation) over the entire Park (MD 47).	Low



# Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park

Joint Management Plan February 2016



*'Everything is connected. People, culture, stories... one whole thing... it's all connected... Life... sacred sites... the same thing... all connected.'*

Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl



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# Executive Summary

Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park is Aboriginal-owned land that has been leased to the Northern Territory Government for 99 years to be jointly managed as a National Park.

## Managing Country – our cultural and natural values

Traditional Owners' connection to country is strong with cultural practices maintained to protect physical and spiritual sites throughout the landscape. This provides considerable management challenges to ensure that cultural heritage is not diminished during management of other key values.

The Parks cultural assets are a management priority. A Cultural Heritage Management Plan developed by the Central Land Council in consultation with traditional owners will provide direction to on-ground management. Traditional Owners are particularly keen to see their culture included in interpretation material using local language and place names.

Remnants of first contact history, including early pastoralism and mining sites, add to the significance of the Park. These sites require adequate interpretation.

Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park is the only conservation reserve in the Davenport Murchison bioregion and it protects the flora and fauna whose range overlaps the northern boundary of arid species and the southern boundary of tropical savannah species. Importantly, it protects the catchment of a network of permanent and semi-permanent waterholes that are home to a high diversity of fish species. Eight species (one frog, one lizard and six plants) are known to be protected only by this Park.

In recent years extensive wildfires have swept across the Park. Fire management is aimed at reducing wildfire and will incorporate Indigenous knowledge and the practice of small scale, patchy, burns to protect cultural sites and infrastructure, and to manage habitat. Traditional Owners will be involved in the planning and delivery of these more appropriate fire regimes. Developing a management track through the centre of the Park will enable access for improved fire and cultural site management.

Feral animal programs will target the removal of donkeys and horses from the Park. Cattle are not to be grazed on the Park. Good relationships with neighbouring communities and pastoral properties are integral to the planning for mustering, or aerial culling and managing boundary fence lines. Weeds are managed through annual maintenance programs at camping areas and along boundary fences and during routine Park surveillance. The exception is a targeted program to eradicate isolated infestations of Weeds of National Significance.

## Managing visitor experiences

Rising as low, rolling, rocky ranges the Davenport-Murchison Ranges have been eroded and folded creating deep gorges and broad valleys. Situated about 340 kilometres by road south east of Tennant Creek, they provide a getaway for the independent and intrepid four wheel drive traveller looking for the tranquillity of camping along permanent outback waterholes against a backdrop of rugged and colourful ranges.

The Park provides access to the Davenport-Murchison Ranges at several remote and basic camp sites. These are linked by a dedicated four-wheel drive track and also connect to the Binns Track which in itself provides a great alternative to mainstream tourist routes. A new track through the centre of the park has been approved and will enable better management of the park's natural and cultural values as well as provide a new four-wheel drive experience for visitors. As a destination, the Park retains that sense of adventure, through keeping infrastructure low-key and to a minimum.

By virtue of its remoteness, which is its essential appeal, there are limited commercial opportunities for the local tourism industry as it relies on the independent traveller. Traditional Owners however, are keen to explore and be involved in whatever opportunities might arise. The joint management partners will present and promote the Park as a living cultural landscape with strong, ongoing Traditional Owner connection to country.

### **Governance through Joint Management**

The Park will be jointly managed by the Traditional Owners and the Northern Territory (through the Parks and Wildlife Commission). Joint management is about Traditional Owners having input into decisions affecting their own traditional country and sharing with Parks and Wildlife Commission in decision making and implementing management across the Park. A Joint Management Committee with representatives from both partners will oversee strategic direction of the Park and implementation of this Plan. Working Groups will support the Committee in its decision making, or to address specific tasks. The Central Land Council will represent and support the Traditional Owners interests and facilitate consultations as required. Through joint management both partners are committed to continuous learning and improvement so the management arrangements may evolve over time.

### **Operational Management**

The Parks and Wildlife Commission is responsible for the day-to-day management and operations of the Park under strategic direction of the Joint Management Committee. Ranger staff are located in Tennant Creek. As a joint partner, the Territory will continue to fund the day-to-day operation of the Park and encourage and facilitate training, employment and commercial enterprise development for Traditional Owners. In turn, Traditional Owners who live in close proximity to the park, will provide supervision, training and direction to Parks staff in relation to management of sacred sites and in particular, the use of fire.

### **This Plan**

This is the first Joint Management Plan to be drafted for Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park. The partners have worked together to articulate the management directions now presented in this Plan. It has been developed in a positive spirit and both partners are optimistic about the future. The Plan will be measured against key performance indicators to ensure it remains relevant, and will remain in place until it is amended or replaced by a new Plan.

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## Vision for the Park

***‘Country is alive. People are strong. Young people work and know their land.’***

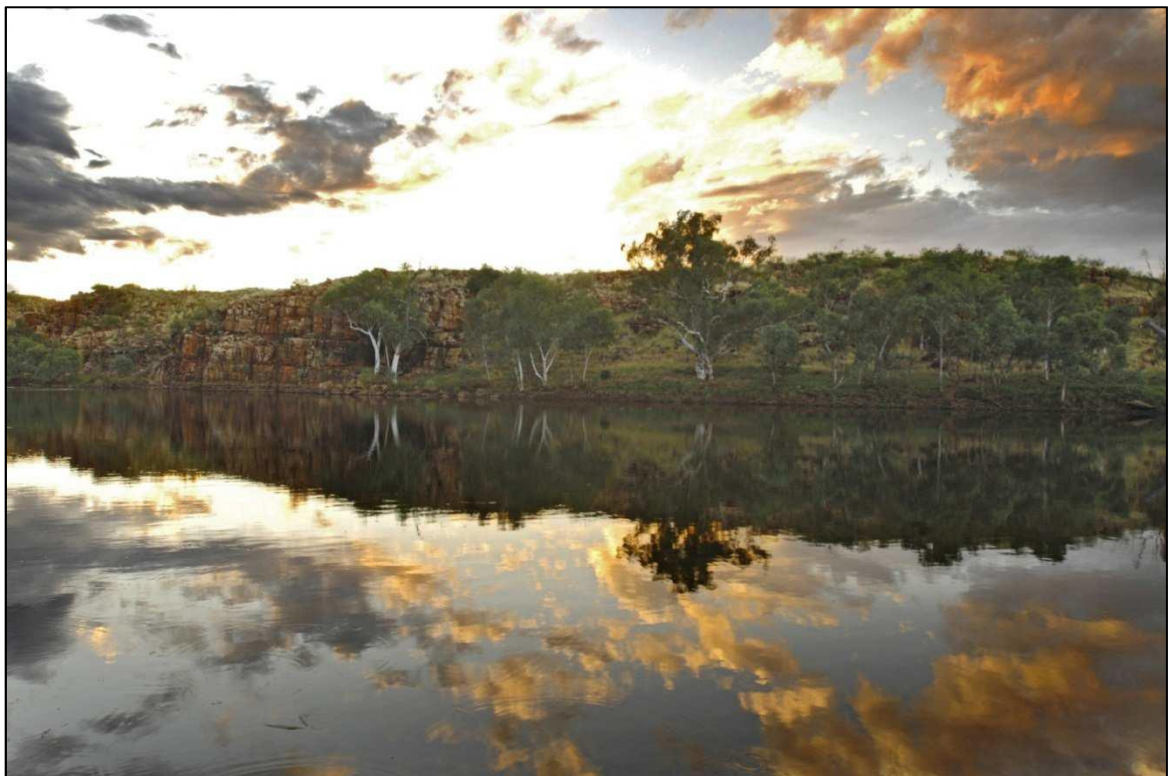
Throughout the life of the Plan, we will increasingly find both partners working together to manage the Park, respecting and acknowledging each other’s skills and knowledge, and communicating clearly.

A strong partnership will mean:

- The country and sacred sites are looked after for current and future generations;
- Traditional Owners take a leading role in the management of the Park. They participate in decision-making, planning and on-ground implementation on the Park;
- Traditional Owners are actively involved through jobs, training and business opportunities; and,
- Visitors enjoy the park and appreciate its significant cultural values.

***‘Strong young people... from all four languages working on country... so they can learn their connections. Traditional Owners as Rangers and Senior Rangers... on country... our future leaders.’***

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**



Waterholes provide photographers with tranquil opportunities. (Image courtesy of Tourism NT)

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The Park and its Values

Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park (127,706 Ha) is set in the relatively remote Davenport-Murchison Ranges, 150 kilometres south east of Tennant Creek (Map 1). The Park is owned by Aboriginal Lands Trusts for Aboriginal Traditional Owners and managed in partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Commission. Being off the beaten track and with minimal development, the Park provides opportunity for visitors to experience the real outback.

Land for the Park was purchased by the Conservation Land Corporation as a Crown Lease in Perpetuity in 1993. In 2003, the proposed Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park was included in Schedule 1 of the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*, allowing the Northern Territory and Traditional Owners to enter into formal joint management of the Park. On the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2008, title for the Park was transferred to Aboriginal freehold land and leased back to the Northern Territory for 99 years to be jointly managed as a National Park with Traditional Owners.

To improve the management boundary for the Park, an additional area, part of the Anurrete Aboriginal Land Trust (NTP 3977) was included in Schedule 5 of the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*. NTP 4387 at Whistleduck Creek may be added to the Park and be covered by this Plan. The Park comprises Erleterlapentye Aboriginal Land Trust NT Portion 4386 (112,000Ha), and part of Anurrete Aboriginal Land Trust NTP 3977 (Administrative NT Portion 6800(A)) of 15,800Ha.

On 25 May 2011 the Park was officially declared under the TPWC Act and was formally named Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park on 29 June 2011. Iytwelepenty is the traditional name for the region and is phonetically pronounced EAT-OOL-ER-POON-CH.

*'This country names Iytwelepenty... Dreamtime name that one... we didn't choose this name'.*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

### Natural Values

The Park is the major conservation area within the Davenport Murchison bioregion, which is under-represented in the National Reserve System. It represents ten per cent of the area of the Davenport and Murchison Ranges Site of Conservation Significance and protects an extensive network of permanent, isolated waterholes. At least seven fish species are present in these waterholes. Eight species (one frog, one lizard and six plants) are known to be protected only by this Park. On the border of climatic zones, the Park contains the northern extent of arid species such as the Black-footed rock wallaby (*Petrogale lateralis*, nationally-vulnerable) and the southern extent of tropical species such as the Northern Nail-tailed wallaby (*Onychogalea unguifera*).

### Cultural Values

The Park includes the rich, living, cultural landscape of Alywarr, Wakaya, Kaytetye and Warumungu Traditional Owners. It is an important focal area which supports many sites still tended by Traditional Owners. Traditional ceremonial activity continues to sustain the country and there is great potential for traditional ecological knowledge to contribute to park management, particularly fire management. The Park also contains heritage sites, including relics and evidence of the early mining and pastoral history of the area.

## Recreational Values

The Davenport-Murchison Ranges region offers a remote visitor experience for adventurous four-wheel drive drivers seeking to get off the beaten track. The Park supports four-wheel drive tracks, basic camping facilities and shady waterholes. The Park is connected to the Binns Track that traverses the Territory from north to south covering some of the Northern Territory's most remote country. The quiet waterholes and low-key campsites provide an alternative to the more highly visited parks that are readily accessed along the Stuart Highway.



Quiet contemplation and a sense of discovery await visitors. (Image courtesy of Tourism NT)

## 1.2 Purpose of the Plan

This Plan gives the strategic direction for the day-to-day operations of the Park (Map 2), consistent with the requirements of Sections 25AB (objectives of joint management) and 25AC (principles of joint management) of the TPWC Act. The Plan explains how the joint management partners will work together and also is the primary source against which management performance will be measured (see Appendix 1). It provides for the ongoing conservation of the Park's significant natural, cultural and visitor values and continued public use and enjoyment. As such, the Park will be managed to:

- Enable visitors to enjoy a remote part of the Northern Territory and appreciate its cultural significance;
- Maintain the significant biodiversity values, especially the Park's threatened species and wetland values;
- Maintain an equitable and effective partnership with Traditional Owners; and,
- Meet the needs of Traditional Owners to maintain their connection to country, protect and manage their sacred sites and to create employment opportunities in the Park.

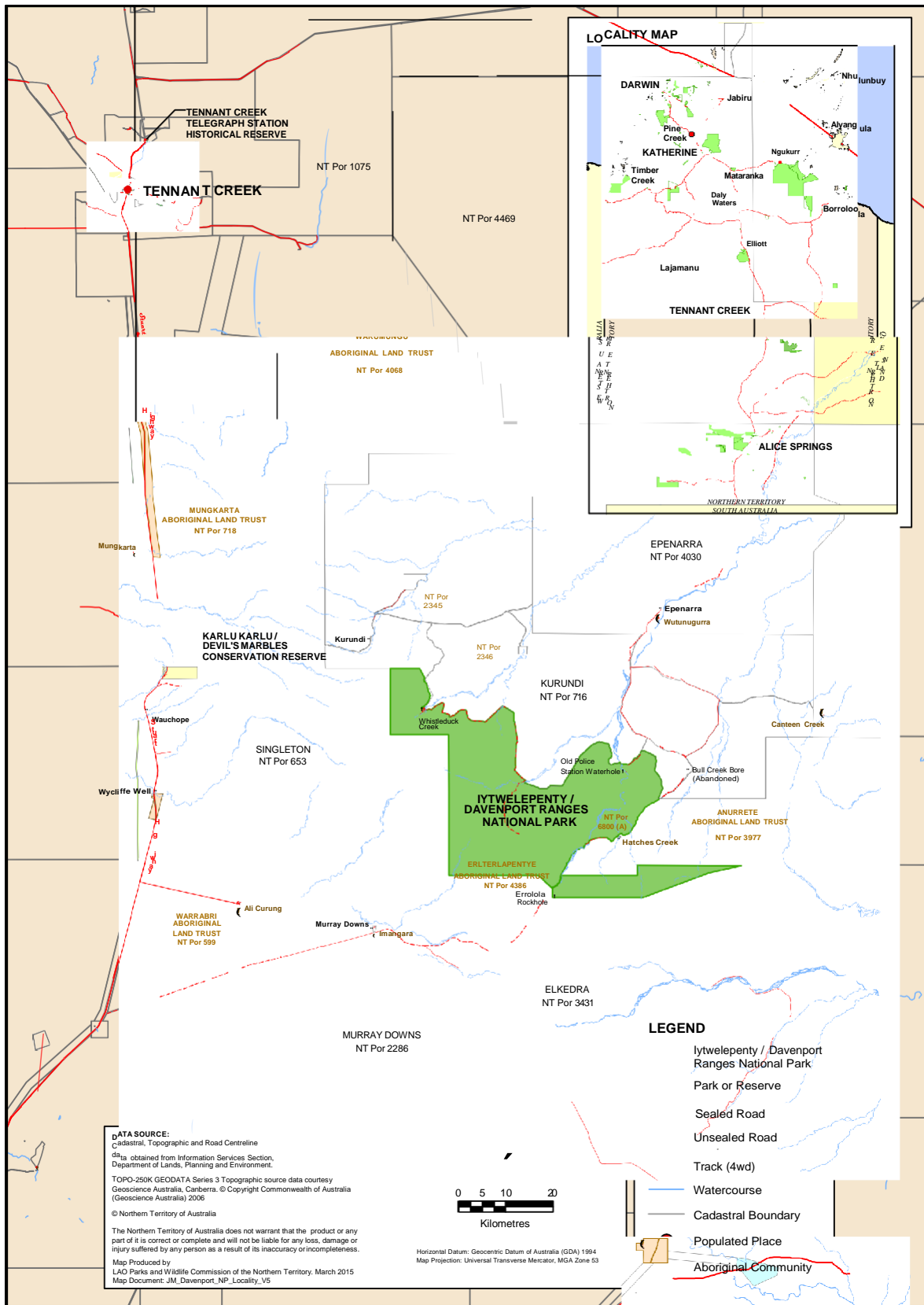
This is the first Plan for the Park and will remain in effect until amended or replaced by a new plan.

*'Write 'em down... strong words in that book... keep 'em straight... them young people and other Rangers got to read 'em word... what they (can) do in the Park.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

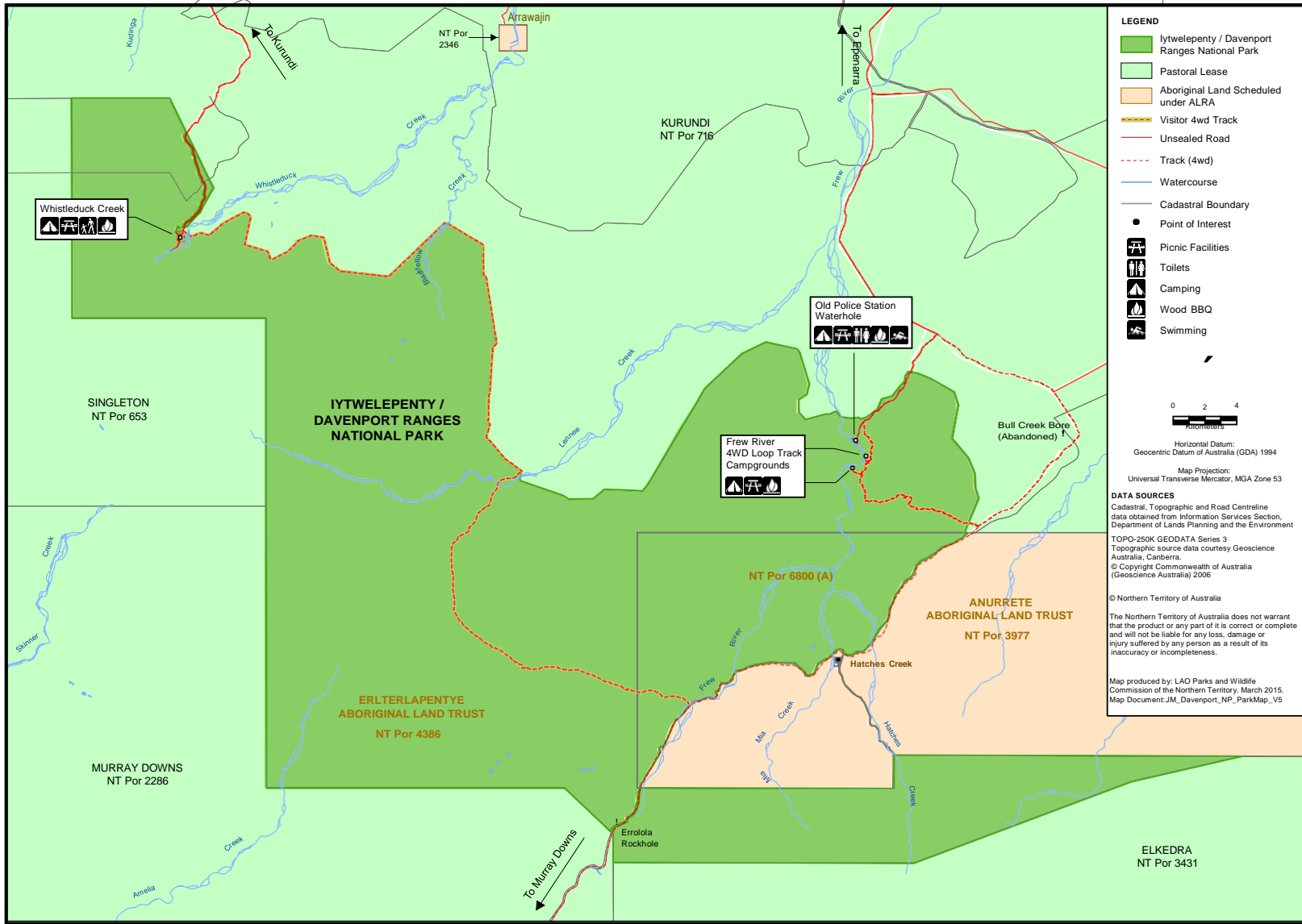


Map 1 Location Map Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park





Map 2 Park Map Iywelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park



## 2. Park Governance

Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park is Aboriginal land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth) (ALRA)*. Traditional Owners have agreed to lease the land back to the Territory for 99 years, and to work together to manage the Park. Under section 25AA of the TPWC Act the joint management partners for the Park are the Northern Territory of Australia (Territory) and the Aboriginal Traditional Owners (Traditional Owners) of the Park. In developing and implementing this joint management plan, the joint management partners are bound to comply with their obligations under the TPWC Act, the Park Lease and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) registered under the *Native Title Act*. The joint management partners must manage the park in accordance with this Joint Management Plan.

### 2.1 Joint Management Partners

#### 2.1.1 Traditional Owners

*'All four tribes... all connected. All connected by sacred site.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

Traditional Owners recognise that their ancestors have occupied and used the land and waters of Iytwelepenty since creation time. To this day they have continued to observe their traditional laws and customary practices on this country. Traditional Owners identify with the Alyawarr, Warumungu, Kaytetye and Wakaya languages and seven traditional estate groups lie within the National Park:

Traditional Estate Group	General Location	Language Affiliation:	Main Dreaming within the Park area
Akweranty / Anwerret	South-eastern portion of the Park	Alyawarr	Ankerr - emu dreaming
Antarrengeny	North-east and southern portion of the Park	Alyawarr	Kwelharr or Rwaney – Black-footed rock wallaby dreaming
Arrawatyen (or Arrawajin in Warumungu)	North-eastern portion of the Park	Warumungu / Wakaya / Alyawarr	Kwaty (Alyawarr) or Ngappa (Warumungu) - rain dreaming
Kelantyerrang (or Karlanjirangi in Warumungu)	North-central part of the Park	Warumungu	Karlanji (Warumungu) or Arlanty (Alyawarr) - long nosed dragon dreaming
Lyentyawel Ilepparranem	South-west and central portion of the Park	Kaytetye / Alyawarr	Arwengalker - sugarbag, wild honey dreaming
Tyaw	South-east wedge of the Park	Alyawarr	Kwaty - rain dreaming
Warwepenty (or Warupunju in Warumungu)	North-west portion of the Park	Warumungu	Arwengalker (Alyawarr) or Kurlppu (Warumungu) - sugarbag, wild honey dreaming

Membership of the landholding group associated with each of the seven estate groups is by descent from the four grandparent lines. Traditional Owners describe themselves as either *apmerek-artwey* or *kwertengerl* for one (or more) of these countries. They are *apmerek-artwey* on the basis of affiliation through father's father (arreng or arrengey in Alyawarr; kangkuya or kangku in Warumungu), and secondarily on the basis of filiation through mother's mother (anyany in Alyawarr; jurttanti or jaaju in Warumungu). They are *kwertengerl* on the basis of filiation through mother's father (artartety in Alyawarr; tapu tapu in Warumungu) and father's mother (aperl or aperley in Alyawarr; tapu tapu or aputu in Warumungu).

In addition to descent based affiliations to country, individuals may be incorporated into one or more landholding groups on the basis of non-descent based criteria. These include; birthplace and/or conception site affiliation; physical, residential and long-term historical connections; and recognised possession of knowledge of the spiritual and physical properties of the landscape.

Succession may also lead to another group, or set of groups, taking on a role to look after the sites and sacred property of another group. Over time this custodial role may become formally recognised as ownership of the estate and its sacred property through ceremony.

### **2.1.2 Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory**

The Territory will generally carry out its joint management obligations through the Parks and Wildlife Commission. For the purposes of this Joint Management Plan, references to the Parks and Wildlife Commission as a joint management partner should be read as including a reference to the Territory.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission is dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural values of parks and reserves, while providing high-quality nature-based tourism and recreation opportunities for visitors. The Parks and Wildlife Commission is committed to: engaging the public and working with the interests of the community; to seeing that the joint management partnership grows and becomes truly equitable; and ensuring that Traditional Owners benefit culturally, socially and economically from joint management.

## **2.2 Joint Management**

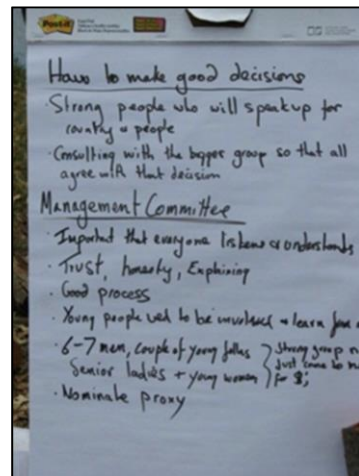
Joint Management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Commission working together, exchanging their knowledge and expertise, solving problems and sharing decisions. A mutual understanding of country, Law, culture and Indigenous decision-making principles and responsibilities are fundamental to making good joint management decisions.

Good joint management has a clear structure and process for making decisions and both partners accept and understand their roles and responsibilities within this framework. The partners are optimistic that this new way of learning and working together will provide equity and continue to build trust and respect. Both partners acknowledge that it will take time and support to build capacity and a strong working relationship. For the purpose of joint management, the term governance is defined as *the way the partners organise themselves and the rules they put in place to realise their shared vision*. It includes all aspects of partnership, communication, planning and decision-making.

Working in a cross-cultural environment requires mutual trust and respect as well as clear communication at all levels. A shared understanding of country, culture and indigenous decision-making principles are fundamental to making good joint management decisions. Developing this Plan together has been the first step in moving both partners towards a better understanding and acceptance of the motivation and logic behind decisions affecting park management.

## PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

- Decision-making and accountability should be shared equitably.
- Time spent together on country is important for developing mutual trust, respect and understanding between the partners.
- Indigenous decision-making processes must be respected.
- Management priorities will be guided by the Park's key values.
- Planning and decision-making must incorporate risk identification and minimisation.
- Engagement and employment of Traditional Owners in management operations is central to joint management success.
- Resources are limited and must be used effectively.
- Joint management has to be checked to see that it is working well. It is important to keep improving.
- Public support for joint management is very important.



All partners are involved in joint management decision making

## 2.3 Planning and Decision-making

### 2.3.1 A Partnership Approach

Joint management provides exciting new opportunities to make better management decisions based on a combination of Indigenous and western approaches to land management. Successful joint management relies on meaningful engagement with Traditional Owners and will be measured against the achievement of the aims in this Plan and the satisfaction of the joint management partners.

For Traditional Owners of the Park it is essential that appropriate senior people are involved in making decisions related to their country. Across the Park different groups of Traditional Owners maintain responsibility for different areas of country. Traditional Owners emphasise the importance of ensuring decision-making structures reflect the differing responsibilities between different language and estate groups. As the Park contains important sacred sites it is essential that relevant senior Traditional Owners are involved in any decisions involving these areas. Accordingly, decision-making will be structured so that the people whose country is affected are well-informed about park operations and are involved in decisions.

*'Apmerek-artwey and kwertengerl get together and talk about the country... to make the right decisions. Apmerek-artwey straighten out kwertengerl if they make mistake. It's the way it's happened in the old days and it's the way it happens now.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

It is important to acknowledge that Traditional Owners' values and perceptions in relation to looking after country do not always line up with conventional park management approaches. Each partners' perception of joint management is strongly influenced by what they value most highly – for Traditional Owners it's Aboriginal law and extended family. Respecting these differences will significantly assist the partnership and provides the basis for effective joint management and governance of the Park.

*'We need trust between Parks and Traditional Owners... trust both ways... we got to talk straight.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

### 2.3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Each of the joint management partners have responsibilities for looking after the Park and clear roles and responsibilities have been established and defined to meet the processes used in decision making.

- The **Joint Management Committee** is the governing body for the Park; established to assist the joint management partners meet the requirements of joint management as set out in the TPWC Act, the Park Lease and the ILUA. Its' primary functions are to provide strategic direction to Park operations, determine local policy and procedures, and review progress against management directions in this plan. The Committee will initially be composed of a male and female representative from each of the seven estate groups nominated by senior Traditional Owners, and two senior Parks and Wildlife Commission staff. The partners wish to remain flexible in the structure of the committee and it will be reviewed as the working relationship progresses to ensure efficient and effective decision making. Regular meetings and communications with the entire Committee are logistically difficult to achieve and alternative structures will be used to process some routine activities or investigate new proposals. For this, the Committee may establish Working Groups to ensure timely decision making and a more thorough investigation of issues.

*'When we talk to National Parks, we have all the right people on the committee... we need a strong committee to make decisions... we need a mix of people... young and old people ... all working together.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

- **Traditional Owners** provide an essential contribution to the direction and management of the Park. Senior Traditional Owners have individual and collective responsibilities and cultural obligations for decision-making regarding country and overseeing cultural protocols. Traditional Owners also have responsibilities for managing traditional knowledge and passing it on to the right people, looking after the land and its resources, maintaining sacred sites and keeping the country alive. Traditional Owners are responsible to the land, law and culture.
- **Parks and Wildlife Commission** is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Park under the direction of the Joint Management Committee. The Parks and Wildlife Commission resources the Park's ongoing management, including; administrative functions, staffing, infrastructure and services in accordance with the Park Lease, ILUA and any relevant laws. Employees are responsible to the Minister for Parks and Wildlife and the Northern Territory Government and represent the Northern Territory in the joint management partnership.
- The **Central Land Council (CLC)** is an independent statutory body created under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. The CLC is responsible for representing and protecting the interests of the Traditional Owners in the Park's management under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. The CLC will support Traditional Owners' interests and facilitate consultations, assist with monitoring joint management processes, and help resolve differences between Traditional Owners and the Partners, if needed.

**Table 1: Decision-making Framework.**

Joint Management Committee	Park Operational Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise executive authority and be accountable for the management of the Reserve.</li> <li>• Set strategic direction and park-specific policy and procedure for management programs and staff to implement.</li> <li>• Approve work programs and internal annual budgets.</li> <li>• Establish directions and criteria to evaluate development proposals.</li> <li>• Consult with senior men and women responsible for sacred sites.</li> <li>• Communicate with, and provide feedback from, the groups that members represent.</li> <li>• Link with the key stakeholders and wider community.</li> <li>• Monitor and review management performance.</li> <li>• Consider other proposals not specified in this plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for day-to-day management of the Park.</li> <li>• Implement operational programs, policy and procedure as approved by the management committee.</li> <li>• Maximise on-ground participation of Traditional Owners in management of the Park.</li> <li>• Report progress to the joint management committee.</li> <li>• Liaise with stakeholders and neighbours.</li> <li>• Issue permits, contracts and licenses according to relevant laws, policy and procedures.</li> <li>• Monitor management effectiveness and adjust management according to new information, improved procedures, new technology and new threats or issues.</li> </ul>

### 2.3.3 Building Effective Governance and Continuous Improvement

The partners recognise the need for training to build effective governance. Traditional Owners are willing to teach Rangers and visitors cross-cultural skills, language and Aboriginal land management techniques. Rangers are prepared to share their knowledge of planning, budgeting and Park management with Traditional Owners.

The partners are also committed to continuous learning and improvement. This involves tracking progress against performance measures, evaluating results and purposely modifying management to reflect new knowledge and insights (see Appendix 1). It also involves monitoring to measure efficiencies, improved effectiveness and progress toward long-term aims.

*‘Young people need to want to be involved... old people want to pass on knowledge and responsibility.’*

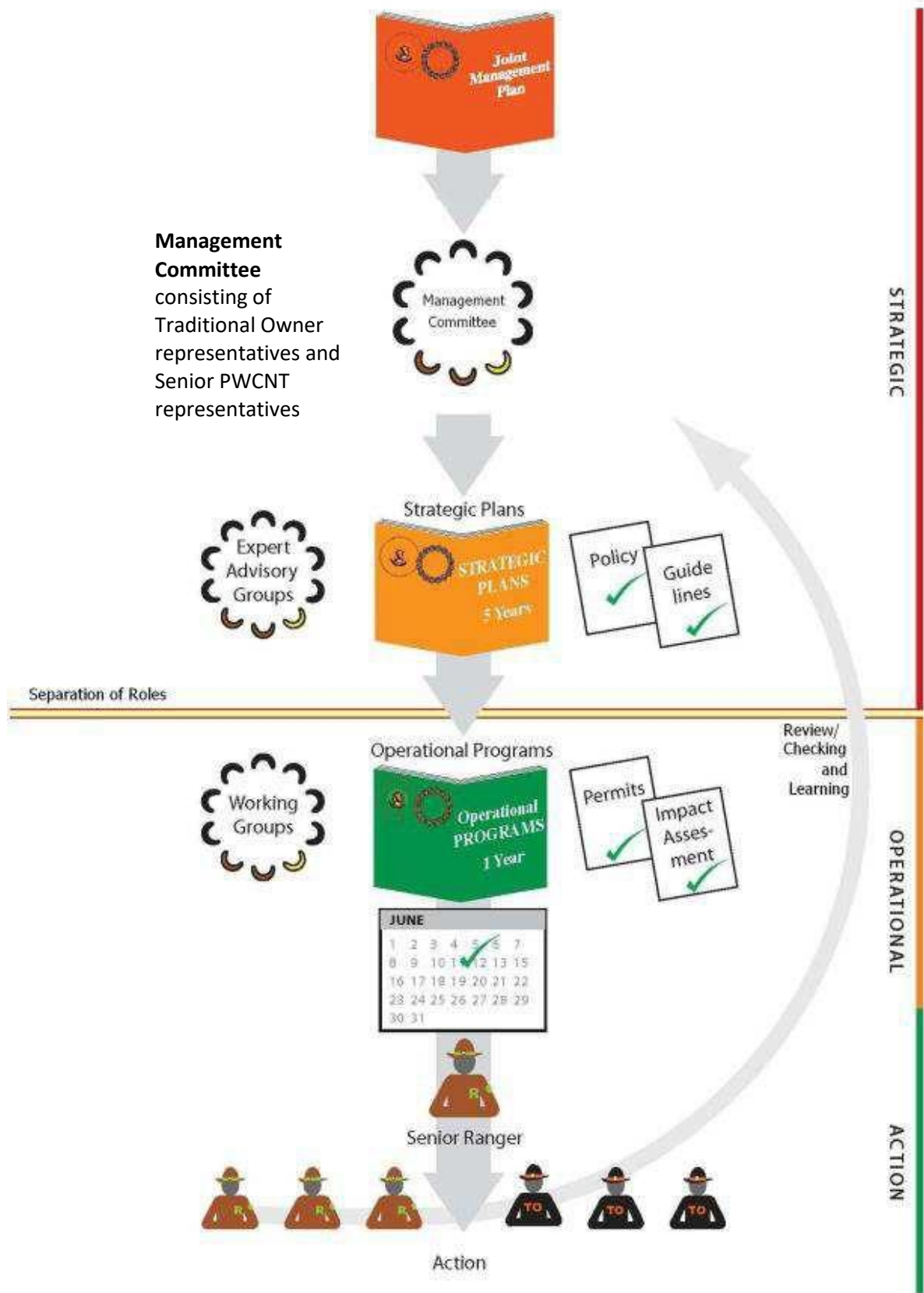
**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**



Four wheel drive opportunities are a feature of the park.  
(Image courtesy of Tourism NT)



Figure 1 Park Management and Operations – Roles and Responsibilities





### **Aims of Park Governance**

- Equitable partnership with effective governance, making well-informed decisions.
- The Aims and Directions in this Plan are achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities.
- Traditional Owners benefit from joint management.

### **Management Directions**

**2.1 Joint Management Committee** – A Joint Management Committee will oversee strategic direction of the Park. For matters that potentially affect any sacred sites, the Joint Management Committee must consult with senior Traditional Owners responsible for the sites.

**Role** - The role of the Committee is to provide direction and policy. It will represent the interests of Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Commission but will not have a direct role in day-to-day operations.

**Membership** – The Committee will initially consist of Traditional Owners representing the seven estate groups (male and female) and two Senior Parks and Wildlife Commission officers. This structure will be reviewed to enable progressive efficiencies over the duration of the plan.

**Meetings** - The Committee will meet at least once a year.

**Making decisions** – Decisions will be made by consensus. The roles and decision-making responsibilities of the Committee are summarised in Table 1.

**2.2 Technical advice, Expert Advisory Groups and Working Groups** – Working groups of Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife Commission staff, CLC officers and specialists may be formed to support the Committee or address specific tasks, such as for fire management, cultural heritage, interpretation, tourism and policy development. Other persons will be invited by the partners to attend meetings and provide advice on particular issues or to represent community interests (for example tourism or pastoral industries).

**2.3 Supporting and building effective governance** - joint management will be a process of continuous learning and improvement. In the future, governance arrangements may be refined to increase effectiveness. Governance training will be provided to both partners to give them the tools and skills to work effectively in the partnership, with attention given to needs identified by monitoring and evaluation.

**2.4 Representation** - The CLC will represent and support Traditional Owners' interests and facilitate consultations when required.

**2.5 Professional development** – Professional standards and competencies will be supported by ongoing training in all aspects of park management. Priority will be placed on local cultural inductions and cross-cultural training with Traditional Owners.

**2.6 Information exchange** – A key role of committee members will be to bring to the Committee the collective expertise, interests and concerns of their group. Committee members will be responsible for passing on information to the wider Traditional Owner group, local community and key stakeholders. The CLC will provide support if required. Park operations will be responsible for effectively communicating information about Park management programs to the Joint Management Committee.

**2.7 Monitoring and evaluation** – A monitoring and evaluation program will be developed that will help develop effective governance. Performance will be measured annually using indicators (see Appendix 1) relating to the satisfaction of the partners and effectiveness of the partnership.

**2.8 Dispute resolution** -The joint management partners will aim to resolve disputes through open discussion and communication, involving the CLC as required or requested by the Traditional Owners. However, should a dispute arise between the partners that cannot be resolved, the parties will follow the dispute resolution processes set out in the Lease.

## 3. Managing Country

### PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING COUNTRY

The joint management partners of Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park recognise that:

- Managing country means working together on country and managing natural and cultural values together;
- Management should protect and where possible enhance Park values;
- Management of cultural knowledge and sites is the responsibility of Traditional Owners; and
- Adverse impacts of wildfire, weeds, feral animals and erosion should be reduced.



Joint management partners meet on country

### 3.1 Cultural values

#### 3.1.1 Living Cultural Landscape

The entire area covered by the Park has important cultural significance to Traditional Owners and both partners are committed to ensure these cultural values are recognised and managed appropriately.

*‘Sacred sites... young Traditional Owners and Parks need to speak with the old people to look after sites the proper way... no short cuts... we need a strong agreement on this... so they are looked after right.’*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

There are many sacred areas across the Park where access and related information is restricted, consistent with local cultural values, laws and customs. Such places are restricted because of *business* – Aboriginal English term for sacred Law and rites, or Dreaming (altyerr or aknganenty) knowledge. These places are termed *amekamek* in Alyawarr and *ekemeyke* or *meke-meke* in

Kaytetye. It is important to note that it is not only the physical site that may be restricted, but also approaches to the site and cultural information associated with it. Other areas of special cultural significance in the Park include Dreaming sites, mens' and womens' ceremonial grounds, places of conception and birth, and traditional walking tracks. As senior Traditional Owners become more elderly, access to certain sites is becoming more challenging for them.

*'Young fellas need to learn about cultural business... they need to get out on country.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

**Aboriginal use** - The Park is used by Traditional Owners throughout the year, in response to seasonal and cultural factors. Traditional owners assert their rights under their own law and the TPWC Act, ALRA and *Native Title Act*, to continue to protect and conduct traditional cultural and religious activities within the Park. They retain the rights to burn, hunt, gather, fish, and use land-based resources (such as food and medicinal plants and trees, timber, charcoal, ochre, stone and wax), to have access to and use waters, and to camp, erect shelters and other structures within the Park. Areas within the Park are also accessed to monitor and clean sacred sites that continue to be used for ceremonial purposes for both mens' and womens' business.

*'We need to keep alive our stories, business and knowledge... it's important... really important ... stories, dreaming, knowledge need to be passed onto the young.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

**Aboriginal knowledge** - The need to transfer knowledge and practices from old to young people is one of the most important issues identified by Traditional Owners. Traditional Owners duties include on-site teaching of younger members of the landholding groups by elders about each site's associations and how to appropriately look after the physical and spiritual attributes of these places.

*'We need to pass on the stories, language and knowledge to our grand kids.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

Recording cultural heritage, particularly oral history is a priority for Traditional Owners. They also seek to have their Indigenous ecological knowledge, skills and experiences incorporated into on-ground operations for the Park, applied appropriately and in the right context.

There is great scope for Traditional Owners to interpret the significance of the Park to Park staff, commercial operators and visitors. Together the partners can promote an understanding and respect for the traditions, languages, cultures, customs and skills of Traditional Owners. The partners will ensure Traditional Owners are always recognised as the owners of their knowledge and retain the right to control who can use their knowledge and how.

**Fire** - *Rwa* is a major Alyawarr cultural tradition associated with the origin and continuation of the Alyawarr social system. The use of fire and burning is also a technique for hunting food animals and for influencing types and growth of food plants in certain areas, both physically and symbolically. The technique of controlled burns to assist hunting and regrowth was, and is, especially effective in the Park's range country with its numerous natural barriers such as pounds, escarpments and narrow gorges. As part of the continuing right of Traditional Owners to engage in their cultural practices within the Park, these burning practices will be resumed.

Traditional Owners have identified special areas, sacred sites and features that need to be protected from fire. Guidelines and standard operating procedures for burning will be established as a priority with assistance from Traditional Owners and CLC. Senior Traditional Owners will take a leading role in the decision-making, planning and on-ground implementation of any burning associated with cultural site management. Traditional Owners are equipped to undertake prescribed burns in the Park, but require the support of Park staff, Bushfires NT and the CLC to obtain the required accreditation to participate in on-ground PWCNT fire

management work.

**Culturally significant species** - Senior Traditional Owners identify all plant and animal species in the Park as culturally and economically important to local Aboriginal people.

*'Too much Buffel Grass, there used to be a lot of bush onions, tomatoes, pencil yams, now... nothing.'*

#### Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl

*Trees* - all mature trees (regardless of species) are culturally significant across the Park, particularly in several areas in the north-west and central sections of the Park. Traditional Owners continue to collect sugarbag (native honey) ngkwarl or arwengalker (in Alyawarr) or kurlppu (in Warumungu) amongst the branches and trunks of mature trees.

*Water and Waterholes*- kwaty (in Alyawarr) or ngappa (in Warumungu) - Rain Dreaming is an important tradition in the Ranges country, including several locations within the Park. Given the importance of the kwaty traditions, songs and ceremonies, no waterholes, rockholes and watercourses in the Park should be disturbed unless the permission of senior Traditional Owners is provided.

*Black-footed Rock Wallaby* - kwelharr or rwaney (in Alyawarr) - the Alyawarr name for the Davenport and Murchison Ranges area means where the *kwelharr* or *rwaney* (Black-footed rock wallaby) run, or, where the *kwelharr* or *rwaney* tracks are everywhere. The tradition associated with kwelharr or rwaney is highly significant and underpins certain men's ceremonies throughout the local area and wider region. Several sites associated with these traditions have access and other restrictions attached to them.

*Emu Ankerr* and *Thorny Devil Lizard* Arnkerrth - These species are culturally important because the traditional track relating to them is important to the broader region.

Other plant and animal species with cultural significance within the Park include:

*Areng* - Euro

*Inap* - Echidna

*Arlanty* (Alyawarr) or *Karlanji*  
(Warumungu) Long-nosed dragon  
*Lophognathus longirostris*

*Kangelarr* - edible fruit vine

*Arlatyey* - Pencil yam *Vigna lanceolata*

*Kelkareng* - Holly Grevillea *Grevillea wickhamii*

*Arlewatyerr* - Sand goanna

*Marntekarr* - snakes

*Arnwekety* - Conkerberry *Carissa lanceolata*

*Ntang Alkentyar* (seed) from *Alerrey*  
(wattle species) tree

*Arwengerrp* or *Kwepeng* (Alyawarr),  
*Kurtinja* (Warumungu) - Bush Turkey,  
Australian bustard *Ardeotis australis*

*Rtey-Rtey* (Alyawarr), *Tiyatiya*  
(Warumungu) - Australian Magpie Lark,  
*Grallina cyanoleuca*

*Aylperr* - Catfish sp.

*Wirilki* - Witchetty grub

*Ilenty* - Galah

*Yerrakwerr* - Small onion species

### **3.1.2 Exploration, Colonisation and Mining Heritage**

Despite its remote location there are historic sites and stories from the early European contact period starting with John McDouall Stuart and his party in 1860 when, on attempting to reach the north coast, named the Davenport Range after the Honourable Samuel Davenport, MLC.

Not long after, in 1872, the Overland Telegraph was established and it opened the area up for further exploration and pastoralism. By the late 1880's, pastoral 'outstations' were established on the Frew and Elkedra Rivers and at Murray Downs Creek.

In 1896 the Government Geologist, H. Browne, led the first official party to explore the Davenport Ranges. His party documented the prospective nature of Hatches Creek. The presence of heavy minerals was confirmed by Alan Davidson in 1898 when he made a detailed journey for the Central Australian Exploring Syndicate. He also reported an abundance of sizable fish in the Elkedra River, possums along the creeks and already the presence of wild cattle.

By 1916, mining activity in Hatches Creek was producing wolfram (also known as tungsten) and its various ores (scheelite and wolframite), and small amounts of gold. Tangible evidence of the mining period and mining infrastructure still exists but, except for the head-frame, batteries and some miscellaneous workings, this is outside the Park boundary.

Sustained connection to country means that Traditional Owners have detailed knowledge of the first contact period and the cross-cultural interactions. The colonisation stories often overlap experiences of bloody cultural clashes and emerging co-dependency. Many Indigenous people around Itywelepeny became involved in both the mining and pastoral industries, settling closer to sources of food and provisions received in exchange for their labour. Cattle arrived on the Frew River in 1889 but the enterprise was abandoned by 1896 after drought, low prices and attacks on cattle from Aborigines. A police station was built on the site of the pastoral ruins and occupied for a brief period from 1919. The ruins of the old police station, on the south side of the Frew River are a significant reminder of early Government intervention and law and order in the region.

These heritage sites have not been properly documented, or assessed for significance and heritage values. The partners are required to consult with the Heritage Branch and seek approval to undertake proposed works to any sites. Damage by fire, livestock, human interference, vegetation growth and termite damage provide a threat to the integrity of these sites. Sites should be properly documented and conserved until their significance is clarified.



### **Aims for Managing Cultural Values**

- Traditional Owners satisfied with their involvement, fulfilment of their cultural responsibilities and protection of their sacred sites.
- Indigenous knowledge and practices incorporated into Park operations and managed to the satisfaction of Traditional Owners.

### **Management Directions**

**3.1 Cultural heritage management plan** - A Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) developed by the CLC in consultation with Traditional Owners will be endorsed by the Joint Management Committee for implementation. The partners and CLC will work together to identify supporting resources, if required.

**3.2 “Back to country”** - With support from the CLC, the partners will spend time on country together, facilitating transmission of cultural knowledge and skills between Traditional Owner families, to the younger generation and Parks and Wildlife Commission staff as appropriate.

**3.3 Aboriginal cultural business** - the Parks and Wildlife Commission will respect advice relating to cultural matters and customary obligations from Traditional Owners. Ample notice will be given to the public regarding temporary closures, if required.

**3.4 Recording of oral histories and Indigenous knowledge** - is a high priority to senior Traditional Owners to strengthen their responsibilities and continue their traditions. CLC will provide support.

**3.5 Indigenous knowledge, practices and priorities** - will be incorporated into Park management operations consistent with PWCNT Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property policy and with the active leadership and involvement of Traditional Owners in planning and on-ground implementation.

**3.6 Traditional burning** - As a priority, Park burning guidelines and standard operating procedures will be completed by the Joint Management Committee and approved by all Traditional Owners. Traditional Owners will take a leading role in the decision-making, planning and on-ground implementation of fire management associated with their cultural sites. Burns will be conducted in accordance with the approved CHMP and any legal obligations applying to the PWCNT.

**3.7 Hunting and gathering** - If required, hunting and gathering guidelines will be developed by the Joint Management Committee and approved by all Traditional Owners.

**3.8 Culturally sensitive areas** - Park staff will respect restrictions and guidelines for sacred sites or culturally sensitive areas of the Park as directed by senior Traditional Owners. Park staff and their contractors will not visit identified areas of cultural significance unsupervised by senior Traditional Owners.

**3.9 Cultural induction and supervision** - new staff (including both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) will be inducted by senior Traditional Owners before working within the Park.

**3.10 Interpretation** - Cultural heritage and historic sites and places will be interpreted through signs.

**3.11 Cultural Awareness** - The explanation of cultural restrictions will be presented in both English and Alyawarr on signage and in interpretive material.

**3.12 Sacred site clearances** - see Management Direction, Section 5.10.

**3.13 Cultural heritage approval** - see Management Direction, Section 5.10.

**3.14 Cultural objects** - see Management Direction, Section 5.10.

## 3.2 Natural values

### 3.2.1 Natural character

Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park consists of low, rugged rocky hills which contrast with the flat sand plains of the surrounding country. The Park is formed from extremely old rock formations dated at 1820 - 1770 million years before present. The Davenport Ranges are Precambrian silicified sandstone, which has been extensively folded, faulted and eroded with the lines of weakness forming the creeks and waterholes. Soils are generally shallow lithosols, but deep fine-grained alluvial soils occur in the valleys and surrounding plains.

**Bio-regional context** – The Park is the only major conservation area within the Davenport Murchison bioregion which is under-represented in the National Reserve System. The Park also supports ten per cent of the Davenport and Murchison Ranges Site of Conservation Significance. The biodiversity value of the bioregion is not especially high and remains in reasonably good condition. The Park protects a good proportion of range country, however only a small sample of flood-out areas and valley floors are reserved. Any future reserve extensions should preferably include more fertile lowland environments.

**Wetlands** - Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park protects an extensive network of permanent and isolated waterholes. The catchments contain several deep, permanent rock-holes providing a variety of environmental conditions favourable for the various fish species and diversity of aquatic and semi-aquatic plants.

**Native plants** – The Park contains a relatively high number of plant species for the area (approximately 435 plant species) and six species are known to be only protected by this Park. Plant community diversity is low when compared to other parts of Central Australia with only six major communities:

- *Snappy Gums foothills* - where representative species are Snappy Gums (*Eucalyptus leucophloia*), Spinifex hummock grasses and Turpentine Bush (*Acacia lysiphloia*) and is the dominant plant community of the area.
- *Sand plain communities* - comprising mostly Soft Spinifex (*Triodia pungens*), under various shrubs and small trees such as *Acacia coriacea*.
- *Soft Spinifex rocky hills* - typified by Soft Spinifex (*Triodia pungens*) interspersed with Acacia and Grevillea species, such as *Acacia monticola*, *Acacia hilliana*, *Acacia spondylophylla* and *Grevillea wickhamii*.
- *Watercourse and associated frontage communities* - dominated by River Red Gums, (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), Melaleuca species and various perennial grasses. The sandy watercourse frontage country supports grasses and occasional trees such as Bloodwood (*Corymbia opaca*).
- *Mulga red earths* - small stands of Mulga associated with *Aristida* grasses and some forbs such as *Sida* species.
- *Woodland on gravelly flats* - typified by annual and perennial grasses under trees such as Bloodwoods (*Corymbia opaca*) and Ghost Gums (*Corymbia aparrerinja*).

The Park supports plant species with tropical affinities overlapping with species with more arid southern/central affinities. Species such as *Grevillea refracta*, a typical Top End plant is found at the southern extreme of its range in the Park, and *Grevillea wickhamii*, common to central Australia, are both found on the Park. At least seven rare, endangered or significant plant species occur within the Park.



**Native animals** – Two animal species (1 frog and 1 lizard) are known to be protected only by this Park. The Park contains the northern extent of arid species such as the Black-footed rock wallaby (*Petrogale lateralis*, nationally-vulnerable) and the southern extent of tropical species such as the Northern Nail-tailed wallaby (*Onychogalea unguifera*) and Spectacled Hare-wallaby (*Lagorchestes conspicillatus*). The rare Greater Bilby, *Macrotis lagotis*, has been found on Kurundi Station and may occur in the Park.

The area is particularly important for its diversity of fish species. A total of seven species representing six families have been recorded from the major catchment systems.

### 3.2.2 Managing threatening processes

The main threats to the natural and cultural values of the Park are likely a result of the impact of large wildfires, changed fire regimes, Buffel grass and large exotic herbivores.

**Fire** - Fire has long been used by Traditional Owners to manage their country however, since European colonisation fire regimes have shifted from small-scale patchy fires to more frequent and widespread wildfires. In recent history, large wildfires have affected significant portions of the Park, as demonstrated in 2001 when approximately 80% of the Park was burnt in a single wildfire event.

Traditional Owners are continuing to practice traditional burning which differs from approaches introduced by the Parks and Wildlife Commission over the past 20 years. Senior Traditional owners will have a lead role in the decision-making, planning and on-ground implementation of any burning related to cultural site management.

The prevention and control of wildfire requires close collaboration with neighbouring communities and landholders

*'...You need knowledgeable people, where to burn and where not to burn.*

*Rangers come from other place... might burn wrong place... Ranger can't do as he likes... must ask us. The main men... teach 'em little bit too. Aboriginal Ranger still has to ask us... If a ranger burns on his own... we'll sit him down and sort him out... he got to know the rules... Really straight rules suits us and suits you.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

Fire management should focus on protecting sacred sites, incorporating traditional burning practices, protecting habitat through avoiding large catastrophic wildfires and collaboration with neighbouring landholders to avoid fires crossing property boundaries. In addition to applying traditional approaches to burning, fire management will require strategic fire breaks and fuel reduction around cultural sites and infrastructure.



Traditional Owners will play a leading role in protection of sacred sites

**Weeds** - The Parks and Wildlife Commission has a responsibility under the *Weeds Management Act* to take all reasonable measures to control the infestation and spread of declared weeds. The limited populations of Parkinsonia *Parkinsonia aculeata*, a weed of national significance, are managed as a priority. Other declared weeds: Goats head burr *Acanthospermum hispidum*; Khaki weed *Alternanthera pungens*; and, Mossman River Grass *Cenchrus echinatus* are confined to campgrounds and routinely managed. There are other non-declared weeds such as Couch grass *Cynodon dactylon* which is spreading along the waterways but its spread cannot be managed. Buffel Grass is another non-declared weed, highly invasive and threatens the vegetation in the river valleys and plains surrounding the Park. Buffel grass is generally beyond control however there are isolated populations around Whistleduck Creek Campground that are managed and the spread of other populations are monitored. Keeping the boundary fencelines clear of vegetation maintains a fire break and enables management and maintenance of the fence.

*'Buffel grass... good for cattle... no good for country... fire gets away now. Too late for Buffel grass. If you burn it, it comes back again. When it rains it comes back thicker.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

**Feral animals** - Large introduced herbivores such as donkeys and horses disturb sacred sites, impact on waterways, encourage weed infestation and degrade land condition. Traditional owners have highlighted the importance of managing these animals humanely and recognise that establishing and maintaining good fences as the main basis for control. Aerial culling will be used when numbers warrant, following agreed standard procedures which outline notifications and approval processes.

Other introduced animals known to occur in the Park include cats and foxes which prey on native species and for which there are no current management or control options. There are no known introduced crustaceans or fish in the Park.

**Cattle** – The Park will be managed to be free of cattle. Fencing and maintenance of fences is an important management strategy however not all boundaries can be fenced and cattle access the Park from neighbouring pastoral properties. It is important for operational plans to include an effective fence maintenance program and for the opportunity for Traditional Owners to be employed. Mustering and removal of cattle from the Park will be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the *Livestock Act*.

*'Donkeys, cattle and horses, push'em all out. Put up fence. But don't ask us about what to do with the lonely ones... we don't want to say 'no'.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

**Management Access** – Only a small proportion of the Park is accessible by vehicle which significantly constrains park operations and cultural site management. Management effectiveness could be increased by establishing a vehicle track through the central portion of the Park.



Long-term strategic planning is required for management of fire.

### **Aims for Managing Natural Heritage Values**

- Indigenous knowledge is incorporated into Park operations and managed to the satisfaction of Traditional Owners.
- No significant wildfires across the Park.
- Weeds of National Significance are eradicated and the impact of other weeds kept to a minimum
- The Park is free of livestock

### **Management Directions**

**3.15 Operational programs** – management of fire, weed, feral animal and erosion will be directed through annual operational program(s) developed with Traditional Owners. The operational management priorities for the Park are firstly to protect the integrity of sacred sites and secondly to protect broader landscape values of the Park.

**3.16 Collaboration**- will be encouraged with nearby Aboriginal and pastoral landholders to gain better land management and employment outcomes and improve economies of scale. Plans will be developed, as far as possible, with neighbouring landholders for improved fire, feral and weed management.

**3.17 Park and cultural management access** – A section of the new Frew River to Lennee Creek track, developed for management purposes, has also been identified for visitor access.

**3.18 Traditional burning practices** – Traditional Owners are encouraged to maintain traditional practices within the park. The partners will work together to include these practices within the annual fire planning process. Traditional Owners will be encouraged to implement prescribed burning in consultation with neighbours and support from PWCNT.

**3.19 Prescribed burning** –The joint management partners will develop a long term fire strategy in consultation with Bushfires NT and neighbours. The plans will be consistent with locally developed burning guidelines and standard operating procedures. Traditional Owners will take a leading role in the decision-making, planning and on-ground implementation of prescribed burning in identified areas. Fuel loads around cultural sites will be reduced and strategic fuel breaks established and maintained within the Park. Broader scale prescribed burns will be undertaken in response to seasonal conditions. Training in fire management is a priority for Traditional Owners.

**3.20 Feral animal control** –Guidelines and standard operating procedures developed by the joint management partners will be applied to control donkeys and horses on the Park. Strategic fencing will be maintained and a fence maintenance program developed to include opportunities for Traditional Owner employment.

**3.21 Cattle management** – Cattle will not be allowed to graze on the Park. Strategic boundary fencing will be maintained to restrict cattle access. Neighbouring property managers will have access to the Park to muster their cattle according to the *Livestock Act*.

**3.22 Weed control** –Buffel grass will be controlled at Whistleduck Creek campsite to contain its local spread and reduce the fire risks. Parkinsonia is a high priority for annual spraying, monitoring and surveying for outlying infestations. All other declared weeds in campgrounds are managed annually during routine seasonal site clean-ups and monitored throughout the main camping season. Fencelines are to be kept as vegetation free as possible through annual spraying and mechanical removal or destruction. The introduction of any new weed species is to be dealt with as soon as practical.

**3.23 Soil rehabilitation** - Degraded areas will be identified and progressively rehabilitated using expert advice. Driving off designated tracks is prohibited.

**3.24 Extraction** - Soil, gravel or rocks will not be removed or disturbed without clearances.

## 4. Managing for Visitors

Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park provides a remote visitor experience for adventurous four-wheel drive visitors seeking to get off the beaten track. It is especially appealing to those who are independent travellers looking for a quiet place to camp, four-wheel drive and enjoy being *outback*.

From the Stuart Highway the ranges appear as low hills and this may be why it is seldom visited. Only once you enter the Park, and drive along the four-wheel drive track that leads high over the rocky ridges and look down on the well watered and long, attractive valleys, do you realise the true feeling of remoteness and sense of being away from it all.

The level of development is minimal and in keeping with the spirit of being *outback*. This encourages independent travellers to spend a few days here rather than just visit for a few hours and pass through. The Park is visited by approximately 1,000 visitors each year but most visitors stay and enjoy the Park for up to three days.

### PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The joint management partners recognise that:

- Positive experiences produce satisfied visitors, who may build a sense of responsibility and stewardship for the Park;
- Visitors' appreciation and respect for the Park is enhanced by sharing information about the Park's unique natural and cultural values; and,
- Well-designed facilities help protect Park values and promote safe, enjoyable visitor experiences.

### 4.1 Engaging with a Cultural Landscape

Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park is a place where Traditional Owners maintain their spiritual and cultural connections with their country. To reflect and promote their continuing living connection with their country, Traditional Owners want to incorporate Alyawarr language and traditional names for features and locations across the Park. The joint management partners are keen to improve the public presentation of Iytwelepenty, carefully managing the cultural information presented to the public.

*'Tourists should feel that it is an Aboriginal place... our language should be across the Park. Sign tell 'em tourists Traditional Owners look after this country.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

To date, there has been little tourism development as the visitor numbers and expectation for services have been low. While commercial opportunities are limited, Traditional Owners living close to the Park are interested in participating in, and benefiting from, tourism development. The feasibility of developing niche commercial tourism operations in partnership with Traditional Owners to derive income and generate employment is still to be investigated.



Well sign-posted camp sites service the intrepid traveller. Image courtesy of Tourism NT



The Northern Territory Government agencies associated with tourism, employment and training, as well as the CLC are best placed to provide support to Traditional Owners who seek to develop tourism enterprises. The Joint Management Committee will support the exchange of ideas on tourism opportunities.

## 4.2 A Remote Visitor Experience



The space of the *outback* fills the camera. (Image courtesy of Tourism NT)

lytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park will be presented as a remote destination that appeals to the enthusiastic outback adventurer. Outside of the peak periods of Easter, long weekends and school holidays, the visitor is likely to find themselves camping alone with little contact, if any, with other visitors.

Proximity to Alice Springs and Tennant Creek make the Parks' waterholes an ideal destination for local tourism especially for short 'camping weekend' breaks. The opportunity to camp within sight of water in an otherwise arid landscape is not common in Central Australia and along with the opportunity for swimming in the waterholes, the Park provides that sense of adventure visitors will long remember.

The four-wheel drive tourism market is the niche driver of tourism. The Park supports a dedicated four-wheel drive track and basic camping facilities which highlights the remoteness, isolation, and solitude found throughout the Park. This is the type of experience that appeals to four-wheel drive enthusiasts who have been to other high profile outback destinations and are now looking for a less trafficked route. The Park is linked by the long distance four-wheel drive Binns Track which commences at Mt Dare in South Australia and crosses the Park before ending at Timber Creek. The new north-south four-wheel drive track through the centre of the park will provide additional opportunities for remote camping at agreed locations between the Frew River and Lennee Creek.

*'This place is very special, no bitumen, no houses, no electricity. Change is very small. Tourists like it natural.'*

### Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl

**Park access** - Access to the visitor areas of Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges National Park is via a loop road from the Stuart Highway. The condition of these roads and perceived distance from the Stuart Highway contributes to the low visitor numbers. The northern access route to Old Police Station Waterhole via Kurundi and Epenarra is 170 km from the Stuart Highway and maintained to a 2WD standard. The southern access via Hatches Creek is 175km from the Stuart Highway and is maintained to high-clearance four-wheel drive standard. Off-road driving is prohibited. The Department of Infrastructure will be encouraged to improve the level of directional and safety signage along the access corridors.

**Facilities** –The facilities provided within the Park are basic but suit the needs of visitors wanting to experience a remote outback adventure. Visitor management will focus on maintaining a low-key bush setting with facilities designed for low levels of maintenance.

#### *Camping*

Camping is an integral part of experiencing the Park but visitors are required to only camp in the designated camp grounds:

- Old Police Station Waterhole (*Athethew*) – this camp ground stretches along an expanse of calm water suitable for swimming with well shaded banks and a backdrop of low rocky hills. Shady campsites overlook the water and cater for groups and individuals. In keeping with the site's quiet nature, basic facilities including tables, wood fireplaces and pit toilets are provided. There are informal walking tracks accessing the historic ruins of the old police station and early pastoral dwellings from the early twentieth century.
- Whistleduck Creek – this quiet chain of shaded waterholes forms the boundary of the camp ground. A range of individual and group camping sites with basic facilities of tables, wood fireplaces and pit toilets are provided away from the water.
- Frew River four-wheel drive Loop Track Campsites - south of Old Police Station Waterhole there are two designated campsites: the First Waterhole and Kappantu Waterhole campsites which have basic facilities including tables and wood fireplaces.

#### *Day Use Areas and Activities*

- Frew River four-wheel drive Loop Track - there is a strong market demand for four-wheel drive access and the Park offers a dedicated track along the Frew River. This track challenges experienced off-roaders but rewards them with expansive views across the rugged rocky hills and valleys. With time, the partners may investigate other four-wheel drive opportunities for experienced, self-reliant visitors seeking remote, bush experiences within the Park.
- Frew River to Lennee Creek four-wheel drive track - sections of this new track will be considered by the joint management partners for remote camping opportunities.
- Irmwenga Waterhole Day Use Area – an attractive waterhole located near Whistleduck Creek campground provides tables, parking, pit toilets and a shade shelter with cultural interpretive information.
- Hatches Creek Head Frame – is currently fenced off from the public for safety reasons but can be viewed from behind the barriers. It has potential to be used to present the region's pioneering mining history.

#### *Walking tracks*

There are no formal walking tracks within the Park. Developing existing informal paths within

visitor areas may be explored by the partners, including the route from the Old Police Station Waterhole campground to the ruins.

**Interpretation** – Helps promote appreciation and respect, and reduces the risk of unintentional damage to the Parks values. The partners are interested in promoting the Park as a place of cultural and spiritual importance and information and images will be carefully managed on signs to show how cultural values interact with the natural values in the past and the present. Traditional Owners have aspirations to develop niche tourism enterprises as a means to promote their cultural connections to country.

*'Tourists - no trouble so far - take photos around here, old stone house (police station waterhole). Good 'round here. Only people get lost sometimes. OK so far but need rules.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

**Safety** - Visitor activity is not without risk. The main public safety concerns include swimming accidents and visitors becoming lost, injured or affected by heat or dehydration. Any emergency incidents are complicated by the Park's remote location. Rangers are trained in emergency response, however Ranger patrols are infrequent. A district Emergency Response Plan is annually reviewed with local Police, the Health Clinic at Epenarra and other emergency services to provide clear direction in an emergency.

#### **Aims of Visitor Management**

- Visitors enjoy themselves, are safe and highly satisfied.
- The Park's value as a living cultural landscape is promoted.
- Traditional Owners find opportunity to participate in the local tourism industry.

#### **Management Directions**

**4.1 Indigenous employment** – The partners will work with the tourism industry, CLC and local operators to identify and foster Aboriginal employment in tourism and park management.

**4.2 Park presentation** – The Park will be presented as a remote four-wheel drive destination with basic camping facilities along permanent waterholes with rich cultural values. It will be promoted at regional and national levels through association with the Binns Track, and targeting the four-wheel drive tourism market. The joint management partners will work with Tourism NT, Tourism Central Australia and other agencies to ensure the Park is promoted consistent with its unique values.

**4.3 Visitor access** – The Frew River four-wheel drive track and the new Frew River to Lennee Creek track provide visitors with access to the interior of the Park. Visitors seeking access outside designated visitor areas require a permit approved by the joint management partners.

The partners will be advised by the relevant road and soil conservation agencies on the most appropriate techniques to upgrade and maintain park roads, reduce erosion and minimise the impact of flooding on visitor access.

- **Park closures** - The Park, or areas within it, may be temporarily closed to the public for flood, fire, rehabilitation works and important ceremonies. These infrequent events will be appropriately publicised.

**4.4 Visitor facilities** – Designated camp grounds and day-use areas are established. Management and maintenance of the campgrounds and picnic areas will be outsourced where it can be effective and contribute to local employment.

- **Future development** – The joint management committee will consider and endorse annual works plans for all proposed developments including siting of all visitor infrastructure.



- **Walking trails** - the informal paths within the visitor areas may be considered for formal development.
- **Camping** - Sites will be maintained to provide basic 'bush style' camping in designated areas. New campsites will be investigated along the Frew River to Lennee Creek track.
- **Campfires** - Firewood collection will be designated on a site by site basis and reviewed on a regular basis. The partners may investigate options to have wood supplied under contract for purchase by campers.
- **Rubbish** – No bins will be provided and visitors are required to take their rubbish with them.

#### 4.5 Other activities:

- **Swimming** – Swimming is acceptable at Old Policeman's Waterhole and Whistleduck Creek.
- **Fishing** – Line fishing is permitted but will not be promoted. The use of fish nets and traps is prohibited.

**4.6 Visitor interpretation** – Interpretive material will aim to increase visitors' awareness of the Park's rich cultural values and recreational opportunities. Both partners will be involved in developing and delivering the interpretation program.

- **Safety** – In conjunction with the Department of Infrastructure, safety and directional signage will be improved and standardised along access corridors and in the Park. Fact sheets, web site and signs will emphasise safety messages and personal responsibility for safety.
- **Aboriginal place names and use of language** – Through the cultural heritage management plan the partners will incorporate Aboriginal place names for areas and features within the Park. Wherever possible, signs will use both Alyawarr and English words.
- **Cultural information** - Information and images of all cultural matters will be thoroughly planned, developed and checked with Traditional Owners, with assistance from CLC.
- **Cultural Awareness** - The explanation of access restrictions for cultural reasons will be presented where appropriate in both English and Alyawarr.

**4.7 Visitor safety** – An Emergency Response Plan for Parks and Reserves of the region will be reviewed annually in collaboration with local Police and other emergency services. Identified risks will be rectified on a priority basis. Tour operators will be encouraged to report incidents and safety issues to Park Operations. Independent travellers will be encouraged to have radio contact or carry a satellite telephone or personal locator beacon.

**4.8 Pets** – Entry of pets will be consistent with the PWCNT Pets in Parks policy.



Memories of peacefully camping by the waterholes remain with visitors after their journey.  
(Image courtesy of Tourism NT)

## 5. Managing for Business Operations

### 5.1 Effective Operations

Park operations are currently carried out by Rangers based at Tennant Creek with regular patrols to the Park. It is hoped that day-to-day management will be carried out by Traditional Owners in the future. At present almost all funding to manage the Park is provided by the Territory where major works and ongoing programs are subject to Territory-wide government priorities. The partners, however, are encouraged to seek extra funding and resources which improve management or promotion of the Park.

On-ground work in the Park is directed by operational programs that are developed to achieve the long-term aims included in this Plan. The Joint Management Committee will be responsible for endorsing long-term strategies and overseeing operational programs implemented by Rangers, Traditional Owners, contractors and volunteers. The Committee's role will be to match priorities and new information with available staff and budgets to best achieve the Park's long-term aims and vision.

### 5.2 Indigenous Training, Employment and Enterprise Development

One of the aims of joint management is to promote opportunities for employment and business for Traditional Owners wherever possible. Traditional Owners emphasise how important training and employment is for their families and acknowledge their responsibility to support young people.

*'We need (Aboriginal) people working here, maybe full time maybe part time. So they're strong on their country... People from this country... all four tribes... working together... so they can learn their connections... like in the old days... all together.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

Since the establishment of joint management, Traditional Owners have participated in paid management programs on a flexible basis. Flexible, project-based employment provides many benefits including work experience, skills exchange and accredited training, and helps build positive working relationships between Traditional Owners and Parks' staff. It also helps young Traditional Owners become work-ready and assists local Indigenous organisations to become contract-ready. There is potential to expand flexible employment in collaboration with nearby community employment programs and Indigenous Community Ranger groups.

*'Young people... community rangers... training up little bit by little bit... train 'em up. To be Rangers so they can come back here and work here.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

Traditional Owners are keen to be involved in contract work. The Territory will encourage and support the participation of the Traditional Owners in commercial activities. Where capacity is lacking, the partners may work with local Indigenous organisations, training providers or community ranger groups. Weed and fire management have been identified as priority training needs. Senior Traditional Owners will be requested to provide cultural supervision in work place areas outside of main visitor areas.

The Park provides a platform for Traditional Owners to present their living culture, from a personal perspective, to visitors from all over Australia and the world. The development of local

cultural tourism enterprises may be restricted by the low volume of visitors but this should not preclude involvement in the tourism industry or the on-going discussion and investigation of opportunities. The tourism industry may be able to advise and help develop niche and seasonal business opportunities that meet the expectations and needs of the four-wheel drive based visitors such as tag-a-long tours. The Traditional Owners are open to considering all opportunities.

### **5.3 Community Engagement and Participation**

Working with neighbours for mutual benefit expands the positive influence of the Park beyond its immediate boundary. The Park's remoteness reinforces the need for regional collaboration. The partners will continue to approach neighbouring communities and pastoral operations for support and co-operation in a range of routine management activities along boundaries including: weed control, feral animal management, fencing and fuel reduction burning. The partners will endeavour to arrange for training and support where local capacity for participation in employment is lacking.

### **5.4 Research, survey and monitoring**

Effective management is very much about review and continuous improvement (see Appendix 1). This requires good information about the Parks values, visitor use, environmental trends, and effectiveness of management actions. Most research is carried out internally by the Parks and Wildlife Commission, or related agencies, and have clear objectives and are integrated into operational programs. Permits, however, may also be issued to external research agencies which provide additional opportunities to complement and expand the knowledge of the Park and its values. Traditional Owners have knowledge of the Park that may contribute to these research outcomes and they have expressed strong desires to be consulted and invited to participate in the research, survey and monitoring projects and, where possible, be employed in this work. Senior Traditional Owners may request to supervise any access to non-visitor areas including providing site briefings, directions and conditions of access. It is important that research outcomes are communicated to the partners and for intellectual property rights of Traditional Owners to be protected.

### **5.5 Regulated activities and permits**

All commercial operations, tours, commercial film and photography, public events, public gatherings, interference with or taking wildlife, and special access are regulated within the Park and require a permit under the TPWC Act or TPWC By-Laws. The permits provide the conditions under which the activity can be operated to avoid negative impacts on the values of the Park.

An effective permit process is needed to enable assessment of permit applications submitted to the Parks and Wildlife Commission. The Joint Management Committee will establish local policy and guidelines for Park operations for the issue of permits. The partners will need to have regard to timeliness of processing, the interests of Traditional Owners, the community, industry stakeholders and existing Parks and Wildlife Commission policy. Such guidelines will also explicitly state when a proposed activity will, and will not, require consultation with Traditional Owners. Some permits may require paid supervision by Traditional Owners or Parks and Wildlife Commission staff. Until agreed procedures are in place, the CLC will consult with Traditional Owners on permit applications that request any access or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors.

**Tour operator permits** – Tour companies require a permit to conduct trade or commerce within the Park (known as a *Tour Operator Permit*) and if other activities requiring a permit are to be carried out, a separate permit may be required. To facilitate permit processing, the information presented by tour operators needs to be accurate and appropriate, particularly for cultural information.

**Promotion, commercial film and photography** – Traditional Owners have no objection to visitors taking non-commercial film or photography in areas where they have permission to visit. Commercial film and photography can be taken in areas of normal public access in accordance with a permit, Park policies and local guidelines, including Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property.

Traditional Owners advise that commercial film and photography of restricted sacred sites will not be approved and images or representations of restricted sacred sites are not to be publicly presented. Commercial film and photography guidelines will be developed as a priority.

**Research permits and guidelines** – research is encouraged, especially where the resulting knowledge will improve management of the Park and the Territory's park estate. Research proposals will be assessed through consultation with Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Commission staff. Researchers may also require additional permits under the TPWC Act such as a permit to interfere with, take or keep wildlife.

**Development proposals** – All development proposals will be considered and reviewed against guidelines and conditions prepared by the joint management partners to ensure there will be no negative impact on the Park's values. Where development proposals, leases or activities may cause environmental, heritage or cultural impacts, the proponent will be required to demonstrate that the proposal complies with all relevant legislation. The proposal will also require the informed consent of Traditional Owners and comply with the Parks and Wildlife Commission policy on commercial tourism development.

The types of developments that are likely to occur during the life of this plan include:

- Re-designing and upgrading existing facilities, including interpretive signage;
- Development of an access track to the central portion of the Park linking the Hatches Ck area, through Lennee Ck/Julia Basin to Whistleduck Ck;
- New fences and improved vehicle access.

*'Walking track and road... can't make without us. Can't grade without us. Any new development need the old men to check it... if sacred sites get wrecked, then this old man gets sick... these old ladies too.'*

**Apmerek-artwey and Kwertengerl**

**Benefit sharing Agreements** - With the consideration of the Committee and consent of all affected Traditional Owners, this Plan allows the partners to enter into benefit-sharing arrangements with commercial partners.

**Licence or sub-lease** – In certain circumstances, including where a secure form of land tenure is needed, a licence or sub-lease may be entered into. Any licence or sublease entered into by the Northern Territory in respect of the Park must be consistent with the terms of the Park Lease and this Plan and must have the prior written consent of the Aboriginal Land Trust on behalf of the Traditional Owners.

**Protecting sacred sites** – Protection for places that are of cultural significance in the Northern Territory is afforded under overlapping legislation.

The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Cth) gives legal recognition to areas which that Act terms "sacred sites" and defines as: "a site that is sacred to Aboriginals or is

otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal tradition, and includes any land that, under a law of the Northern Territory, is declared to be sacred to Aboriginals or of significance according to Aboriginal tradition". The Act makes it an offence to enter or remain on land that is a sacred site.

Complementary Northern Territory legislation, the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* (NTASS Act) also provides protection for all sites that fall within the scope of this definition. This protection is generally provided in the form of an Authority Certificate from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority in response to land use proposals. It means that the traditional Aboriginal owners have an enforceable right to say who enters their sacred sites, and what cannot happen on their sacred sites. Illegal entry, works on or use of a sacred site, is an offence under the NTASS Act.

Strong joint management will ensure that sacred sites are protected in accordance with Traditional Owners' wishes. Under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth) the Central Land Council has a specific function to "assist Aboriginals in the taking of measures likely to assist in the protection of sacred sites" and under its established procedures will carry out this role in facilitating joint management.

**Protecting heritage places** – The *Heritage Act* (NT) provides protection and conservation of heritage places and objects. Under the *Heritage Act*, approval is required before any work is carried out on heritage places or objects. In addition, the Traditional Owners request that if any artefacts are uncovered that they are not disturbed and are immediately reported to the senior men through the CLC. Under the *Heritage Act*, it is also an offence to fail to notify the Heritage Branch of the discovery of a place or object that a person knows is an Aboriginal or Macassan archaeological place or object.

**Proposals for changes to the Park area** – In 2008 the Park incorporated part of the Anurrete Aboriginal Land Trust (NTP 3977) to improve the management boundary for the Park. Further rationalising may be considered for areas of low conservation value and are subject to considerable impacts and on-going pressure from feral animals and pastoral activity. A small parcel of land, NTP 4387, at Whistleduck Creek may be added to the park and covered by this Plan. While there are no further proposals to expand the Park in the immediate future, the partners may consider co-operative arrangements with neighbouring Aboriginal and pastoral landholders and nearby communities.

**Community living areas** – Community living areas are an integral part of both the continuation of Aboriginal cultural practices and the natural and cultural resource management of the country. Through the *Pastoral Land Act*, Traditional Owners have achieved legal ownership of small land parcels in proximity of the Park. Further sites may be considered by the partners through the Joint Management Committee, however funding is not obligatory on the Territory or Commonwealth Governments. Consent is required from all affected Traditional Owners.

**Mining** – Territory legislation allows for mining in parks and reserves but requires the Minister for Mines to consider the views of the joint management partners prior to granting any mining interest. The partners recognise that mining and extractive activities may adversely impact the Park's cultural and natural values. Under the ALRA, Traditional Owners have the right to control mining on Aboriginal Land. Currently, Traditional Owners feel strongly that mining is not consistent with the values of the Park and are unlikely to approve it. This includes fossicking however this may be revisited in the future. Ochre has always been used in cultural ceremony and practice and nothing limits the right of the Traditional Owners to collect it in the Park.

**Dealing with proposals not in the Plan** – Any proposal not addressed in the Plan will be considered by the Joint Management Committee. Matters affecting the interests of Traditional Owners will require the consent of affected Traditional Owners via consultation conducted by the Central Land Council.

### **Aims of Business Operations**

- The aims and directions in this Plan are achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities, and
- Traditional Owners benefiting economically, socially and culturally through joint management.

### **Management Directions**

**5.1 Management strategies and operational programs** – The partners will prepare and implement integrated management strategies and operational programs for the Park.

**5.2 Day-to-day management** – The Parks and Wildlife Commission will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Park under direction of the Joint Management Committee.

**5.3 Financing** – The Parks and Wildlife Commission will finance and resource the Park's ongoing management including administrative functions, staff, infrastructure and services. Opportunities to supplement the funding of Park operations and programs will be closely examined and could include revenue obtained from sub-leases, commercial agreements, permits etc. External funding may be sought for specific projects or programs.

**5.4 Work experience, training and employment** – The partners are committed to building capacity, employment and career development opportunities for Traditional Owners of the Park.

- **Indigenous Training and Employment Strategy 2014-17** - PWCNT is committed to providing training, capacity building and professional development for Indigenous Territorians to reach a 10-year goal of 30 per cent Indigenous employment within the PWCNT. Indigenous employment will remain a standing item at Joint Management Committee meetings. Training in fire and weed management is a priority for Traditional Owners.
- **Indigenous employment opportunities in the Parks and Wildlife Commission** – the Parks and Wildlife Commission will continue to provide opportunities for work experience, training, casual work and direct employment of Aboriginal people from the district. Steps will be put in place to facilitate the uptake of higher level positions with the long-term goal to have the Senior Ranger position filled by a Traditional Owner.
- **Partnerships with community-based Indigenous rangers and special interest groups** – Flexible employment of Traditional Owners may be expanded in collaboration with nearby community employment programs and local Indigenous community ranger groups. Indigenous training, employment programs and community volunteers will also be encouraged to assist with Park management.
- **Contract services** – The Parks and Wildlife Commission will encourage private sector participation to build the capacity of Aboriginal organisations to fulfil works and service contracts. Preference will be given to participation of Traditional Owners of the Park in any commercial activities conducted under the lease. If other contractors are used, those providing training and employment to local Aboriginal people will be preferred.

**5.5 Tourism** - The partners will liaise with the tourism industry through established forums and organisations. Sustainable cultural and nature-based tourism will be supported, as will the independent four-wheel drive tourist market. Traditional Owners will be encouraged to take up commercial tourism opportunities when they arise. The partners will actively seek assistance from relevant agencies.

**5.6 Cultural Advice** - Traditional Owners will be paid for specialist cultural advice and supervision consistent with the Parks and Wildlife Commission's Fee for Service – Indigenous Engagement in Parks policy.

**5.7 Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property** - Local Indigenous knowledge will only be used with prior consent of the Traditional Owners. Wherever possible, the partners will assist the Traditional Owners to assert their intellectual property rights, consistent with standard policies developed and agreed by the CLC and Parks and Wildlife Commission.

**5.8 Regulated activities** – The Joint Management Committee has established local guidelines and conditions for the issue of permits:

- **Standard permit applications** – Parks and Wildlife Commission staff holding appropriate delegation can approve permit applications that involve activities or commercial concessions which comply with agreed guidelines and conditions, require no special access, and/or are of a nature or type that has already been considered by the Joint Management Committee.
- **Non-standard permit applications** – Consultation with senior Traditional Owners will be required to provide direction to Park operations if a permit application involves special access or activities not addressed by agreed guidelines or conditions.
- **Routine commercial tours** – Permits for tour businesses making normal use of the Park will continue to be issued through the Tour Operator Permit System.
- **Commercial film and photography** – Commercial filming and photography will require a permit. Permits will be subject to local guidelines and conditions and the Parks and Wildlife Commission policy for Commercial Film and Photography policy and guidelines. The partners will not consent to any publication or broadcasting of images of any sacred site.
- **Remote area camping** - a permit is required to camp outside a designated campground.
- **Research** - Wildlife researchers require permits to interfere with, take or keep wildlife. Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Commission staff should be consulted in developing research proposals and proposals should be consistent the TPWC Act, Park policies and guidelines including Indigenous Intellectual Cultural Property.

**5.9 Research, survey and monitoring** - Programs will be approved in operational strategies and subject to annual review. Participation and employment opportunities for Traditional Owners in research, survey and monitoring projects will be maximised. Indigenous knowledge components will be incorporated in project objectives and outcomes where appropriate.

- **Monitoring** – Visitor monitoring will be undertaken as needed and supported by TNT.
- **Park reporting** – The partners will review the Plan in five years based on the performance indicators (Appendix 1) and provide recommendations for change.

**5.10 Development approvals** – Any proposal will require informed consent of affected Traditional Owners, consistent with the Lease and appropriate assessment processes.

- **Impact assessment** - The potential impacts of all proposed activities and developments will be considered and assessed commensurate with the scale of potential impact.
- **Commercial sublease** - To provide long-term security for commercial proponents the partners can provide long term sub-leases and operational arrangements and conditions for an enterprise.
- **Benefit-sharing agreements** – The partners may enter into benefit-sharing arrangements for commercial operations and developments within the Park.
- **Infrastructure sublease** – With approval of affected Traditional Owners (through the Aboriginal Land Trust), consistent with the Lease and appropriate assessment processes, this Plan provides for sub-leases or licenses on the Reserve for specific purposes, including public infrastructure.



- **Sacred sites clearances** – The joint management partners will work together to see that sacred sites are properly protected, supported by the Central Land Council and Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority as required. The Central Land Council will have primary responsibility for consulting traditional owners for all proposed work on the Park.
- **Heritage work approvals** – Approval must be sought under the *Heritage Act* for any works to heritage places and objects.
- **Heritage objects** - Archaeological objects will not be disturbed and will be reported to the NT Heritage Branch within 7 days of its discovery. Traditional Owners also request that a find of any artefacts are immediately reported to the senior Traditional Owners through the CLC.
- **Changing the Park area** – Any proposals to change the Park area will be considered by the partners through the Joint Management Committee, PWCNT and the Northern Territory Government.
- **Establishing new community living areas** - Any proposal to create community living areas within the Park will be considered through the Joint Management Committee.
- **Mining and exploration** - Mining applications will be addressed through the ALRA and s25(AM) of the TPWC Act. Fossicking is currently not permitted but may be considered in the future. Nothing limits the rights of Traditional Owners to gather ochre within the Park.

**5.11 Community engagement** – Neighbours and local stakeholders will be encouraged to work with the partners in matters of mutual interest both inside and outside the Park boundary including strategic planning, developing opportunities and resolving issues.

**5.12 Dealing with Proposals not in the Plan** – Any proposal not addressed in the Plan will be initially considered by the partners through the Joint Management Committee. Any matter that may affect the interests of Traditional Owners will require the consent of affected Traditional Owners via a consultation process conducted by the CLC.

## Appendix 1. Selected performance indicators

These performance indicators are provided to assist the joint management partners to measure success. They are not the only measures of success and other measures may be developed over time. There is a reasonable expectation that they will be achieved, if not year by year, then over the longer term of this plan. When indicators are not achieved, the reasons will be established and steps taken to improve outcomes.

Aims	Performance Indicators	Targets	Means
<b>Managing Country</b>			
Traditional Owners satisfied with their involvement, fulfilment of their cultural responsibilities and protection of cultural sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional Owner satisfaction.</li> </ul>	High	Partners will be asked at annual joint management meetings.
Indigenous knowledge is incorporated into Park operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mutual understanding and park operation capability</li> <li>Traditional Owner satisfaction.</li> </ul>	Increased High	Partners will be asked at annual joint management meetings.
No significant wildfires.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area burnt in fire-tolerant vegetation communities</li> <li>Area burnt in fire-sensitive vegetation</li> </ul>	>5% each year. < 10% over 10 years in total.	Fire mapping, ongoing data management and review.
No large introduced herbivores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence of large introduced herbivores</li> <li>Existing boundary fence maintained</li> </ul>	Low  Stock proof	Opportunistic sightings and occasional aerial surveys.
<b>Managing Visitors</b>			
Visitors enjoy themselves, are safe and highly satisfied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitor satisfaction</li> <li>Number of safety related incidents</li> </ul>	High Low	Occasional visitor satisfaction monitoring. Ongoing reporting.
The Park's value as a living cultural landscape is promoted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traditional Owner satisfaction</li> <li>Visitor satisfaction</li> </ul>	High High	Partners will be asked at annual joint management meetings.  Opportunistic visitor satisfaction monitoring.

Aims	Performance Indicators	Targets	Means
<b>Park Governance</b>			
Equitable management partnership with effective governance that makes well-informed decisions.	Joint Management Partners Satisfied with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and Engagement</li> <li>• Representation and Decision-making processes</li> <li>• Building capacity</li> </ul>	High	Partners will be asked at annual joint management meetings. Ongoing record-keeping, reporting and review.
The Aims and Directions in this Plan are achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement of Aims and Management Directions in this plan</li> <li>• Implementation of strategies and annual operational programs</li> </ul>	Outcomes realised. % of priority actions completed.	Partners will be asked at annual joint management meetings. Ongoing record-keeping, reporting and review.
Traditional Owners benefit from joint management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New skills acquired by Traditional Owners</li> <li>• Number of days employed in Park programs</li> <li>• Number of contract opportunities created and taken up</li> </ul>	Increased	Partners will be asked at annual joint management meetings. Ongoing record-keeping, reporting and review.



Northern  
Territory  
Government

Attachment 16



# Judbarra / Gregory National Park and Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve

Joint Management Plan June 2011



PARKS AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Judbarra / Gregory National Park and Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve Joint  
Management Plan

Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory

Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport

PO Box 344 KATHERINE NT 0851

This document is available at [www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks/manage/plans/katherine.html](http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/parks/manage/plans/katherine.html)

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## **Acknowledgements**

This Plan is the result of extensive consultation between the Traditional Owners of Gregory National Park and Parks and Wildlife Service Rangers, Planning and Joint Management staff. Northern Land Council (NLC) and Central Land Council (CLC) staff assisted the joint management partners and provided valued input into the Plan's preparation.

## VISION FOR THE PARK

***“We want that place to grow up with jobs for Traditional Owners to look after country and tourists.” (Traditional Owner)***

The joint management partners of Judbarra / Gregory National Park and Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve will work together to look after the Park, respecting and acknowledging each others' skills and knowledge and communicating clearly.

A strong partnership will mean:

- Country is looked after properly, according to Aboriginal Law and culture as well as current biodiversity conservation and heritage objectives.
- The Ngarinyman, Karrangpurru, Malngin, Wardaman, Ngaliwurru, Nungali, Bilinara, Gurindji and Jaminjung cultures, languages and Dreamings of Gregory National Park will be acknowledged and respected as fundamental to landscape management.
- Traditional Owners will be involved in decision making and work on the Park.
- Knowledge will be shared with the next generation of Traditional Owners.
- Visitors will enjoy the Park, respecting and learning about country culture and history.
- We continue to improve how we look after the Park and how we do Joint Management.



*A hair string belt made by an Elder is symbolic of joint management – a strong, practical blend of the traditional and the modern.*



## HOW THIS PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

This is the first Joint Management Plan to be prepared for Judbarra / Gregory National Park and Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. It was prepared by the Parks and Wildlife Service and Traditional Owners from across the Park with assistance from the Northern Land Council and the Central Land Council as well as input from the broader community.

Planning for formal joint management of the Park began with a series of meetings between Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife Service staff, NLC and CLC staff in 2005. Traditional Owners and park staff have discussed how to work together to manage the Park at meetings, country visits and camps throughout the Park over the past five years. This Plan is the culmination of many hours of hard work and negotiation by the partners to establish an effective and appropriate way to look after this large and complex Park.

*Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife and Land Council staff meet to work on the Draft Plan (2005).*





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## SUMMARY OF THIS PLAN

Judbarra / Gregory National Park and Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve are located in the Victoria River District, near the Western Australian border. Encompassing approximately 1 300 000 hectares it is the largest park in the Northern Territory parks estate, and is ranked as one of the highest valued parks for biodiversity conservation. Few parks in the Northern Territory have a combination of such outstanding natural, Aboriginal, historic and visitor values.

The Park is a living cultural landscape for many groups of Traditional Owners who continue to have deep and ongoing connections with the land. It is recognised as an invaluable resource for Traditional Owners in their efforts to transfer cultural knowledge between generations, maintain traditions through ceremony and ritual, and ensure that Aboriginal ways of looking after country are sustained. The Park also offers visitors the opportunity to connect with these living Indigenous cultures. Management of the Park's cultural assets is a high priority. Involving Traditional Owners in park management presents an opportunity for local people to utilise their knowledge and skills about country for the benefit of their communities, the Park and the public.

Judbarra supports a great diversity of flora and fauna including significant habitats for threatened species. Conservation of the Park's biodiversity is a major management focus. An understanding of threatening processes as well as the distribution of threatened species and vegetation types on Park, is the key step towards integrating Operational Plans for fire, weeds and feral animals in order to appropriately manage biodiversity values. Survey and monitoring of the Park's biological resources and inclusion of Traditional Owners and their ecological knowledge in park management programs will further enhance conservation management.

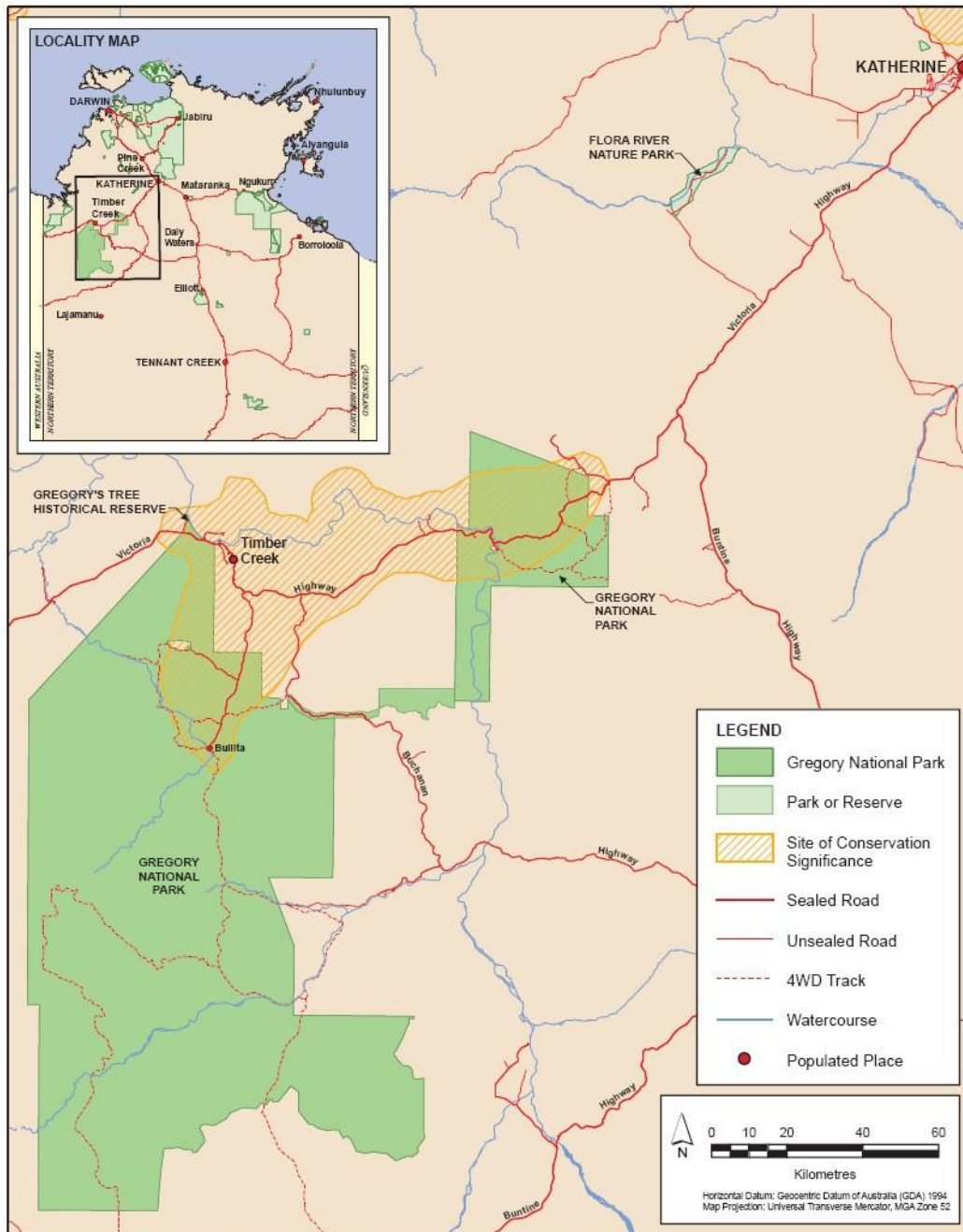
For the majority of visitors the Park's appeal lies in the remote, rugged and unspoilt landscape. Protecting this vast and spectacular park for nature and culture-based visitor enjoyment and learning is a high priority. Healthy waterways with good fishing opportunities, a network of adventurous four-wheel drive tracks, easily accessible picnic and camping areas and a rich and well interpreted Aboriginal culture and history provides for a memorable visitor experience.

Joint management of the Park means Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service are looking after country together, two ways. Responsibility for decision-making will be shared by the partners through a Joint Management Committee, guided by relevant legislation, this Plan and other jointly developed policy and guidelines that are consistent with such legislation and this Plan. Collaboration between Northern Territory Government agencies and with stakeholders such as neighbours and the tourism industry will enhance the success of joint management.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Judbarra / Gregory National Park is located in the Victoria River District, roughly midway between Katherine and the Western Australia border. Encompassing 1 299 455 hectares it is the largest park in the Northern Territory park estate. Access is via the Savannah Way (Victoria Highway), Binns Track, or by four-wheel drive routes off the Buchanan and Buntine Highways. Over 21 000 visitors use the Park every year.

Figure 1 Park Location Map.



The Park lies at the transition of the wet/dry tropics and the semi-arid zone of northern Australia. Most of the Park is within the Victoria Bonaparte bioregion and part of the southwest of the Park lies within the Ord-Victoria bioregion. The vegetation of the Park is accordingly diverse. Tropical woodlands cover extensive areas and scattered pockets of monsoon vine-forest occur, whilst spinifex grasses dominate areas in the south.

Vast tracts of generally rugged terrain that include spectacular sandstone escarpments and gorges, mesas, limestone karst formations, rolling hills and alluvial plains define the Park's character. The Park lies entirely within the catchment of the Victoria River, the largest in the Northern Territory. The upper sections of the Wickham, Humbert and East Baines Rivers also lie within the Park.

For ease of reference in this Plan, "the Park" and "Judbarra" includes both Judbarra / Gregory National Park and Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve.

## 1.1 THE VALUES OF THE PARK

Judbarra serves to protect one of the Territory's most valuable natural and cultural landscapes and contributes significantly to biodiversity conservation.

The Park's values are summarised in this section of the Plan. Together with the joint management partners' vision they establish the purpose of Judbarra and the focus of management directions for the term of this Joint Management Plan.

*The Victoria River winds through the Park that is a living cultural landscape for several Traditional Owner groups.*



### ***A diverse and shared cultural landscape***

For the Traditional Owners of Judbarra, the land is vested with spiritual significance and is an integral part of their cultural identity. The Park encompasses the traditional lands of several Aboriginal language groups that include Ngarinyman, Karrangpurru, Malngin, Wardaman, Ngaliwurru, Nungali, Bilinara, Gurindji and Jaminjung. People of each group continue to use the natural resources of the Park, protect sites of significance and maintain cultural traditions through ceremony and ritual. Numerous archaeological sites on the Park bear testimony to a long history of Aboriginal occupation. Traditional Owners have obligations to look after their country and believe that their relationships with country involve mutual rights and responsibilities. The Park is an invaluable resource for Traditional Owners in their efforts to ensure that cultural knowledge is transferred between generations, maintaining and strengthening culture and ensuring that Aboriginal ways of looking after country are sustained.

The Aboriginal history of the area since settlement is closely interwoven with European pastoral history and of this, a rich oral tradition remains. There are numerous sites through

the Park which remain a tangible reminder of early European exploration and the region's famous pastoral history including Gregory's Tree, Jasper Gorge, Drovers Rest Boab Precinct and the Bullita Homestead Precinct and Stockyards. The recent history of the area encompassed by the Park is the history of contact, conflict and negotiation between colonialists and Aboriginal people. Accordingly, there are many places and artefacts on the Park that testify to the history of both cultures, a number of which can be accessed and appreciated by Park visitors.

### ***An internationally significant conservation area***

The Park's geographic position and size are reflected in the diversity of its flora and fauna, contributing greatly to conservation of Australia's biodiversity. Fifteen threatened species of plants and animals of national and local significance occur within the Park. The large area of the Park offers it some resilience to threats and therefore enhances its potential for long term biodiversity conservation. A range of fire sensitive vegetation communities such as monsoon rainforest, sandstone heathlands and Lancewood persist within the Park. The internationally significant "Victoria River middle reaches and Gregory area" Site of Conservation Significance spans the east and west sections of the Park<sup>i</sup>.

The Park includes a karst field and cave system of international significance with few if any similar sites recorded elsewhere in Australia. The fauna associated with the karst system are not well surveyed but likely to be significant.

The healthy waterways of the upper Wickham, East Baines and Humbert Rivers and the significant Victoria River catchment all offer valuable habitat for aquatic plants and animals as well as important associated riparian vegetation.

### ***An exceptional nature and culture-based tourism experience***

The vast and remote natural and cultural landscape of the Park offers a unique tourism and recreation experience. Over 500 km of four-wheel drive tracks traverse a range of landscapes, offering visitors the best remote, adventure four-wheel driving and camping of any National Park in the Northern Territory. The Park's rivers are attractive recreational resources offering significant boating, fishing, scenic and wildlife viewing opportunities. The north's most prized game and table fish, the Barramundi, draws keen fishing from across Australia.

The Park offers a range of quality interpretive opportunities for visitors' to interact with nature, Aboriginal culture and early pastoral history. The rich living culture of nine language groups with strong spiritual and ecological connections to the Park present a unique and rare opportunity for the development of quality tourism experiences.

## **1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE PARK**

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<sup>i</sup> There are 67 identified Sites of Conservation Significance in the Northern Territory. These areas contain special biodiversity values that require additional protection (Harrison et al. 2009).

Gregory National Park was first declared under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* in 1990 with the acquisition of the former Bullita Station, and portions of Innesvale, Auvergne, Delamere, Humbert River, Victoria River Downs and Mt Sanford Stations. The two hectare Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve was declared in 1978.

As a result of a decision of the High Court affecting many Territory Parks and Reserves, Gregory National Park and Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve were re-declared under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* in 2002. In 2003 the Gregory National Park and Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve were listed in Schedule I of the Parks and Reserves (Frameworks for the Future) Act, enabling transfer of ownership of the Park to the Traditional Owners. The Park is leased from a number of Aboriginal Land Trusts by the Northern Territory for 99 years. The Wambardi Aboriginal Land Trust has also leased to the Territory Aboriginal land held by the Trust which adjoins the Park, effectively increasing the size of the Park and linking the eastern Victoria River sector and western Gregory sector of the Park. The Park is jointly managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service and the Traditional Owners.

Judbarra will be managed to retain its natural character and protect its highly significant Aboriginal, historical and natural values, whilst providing opportunities for visitors to enjoy the landscape, culture, history and wildlife.

Priorities will be to:

- Protect the outstanding natural, Aboriginal and historical resources of the Park;
- Provide a range of interactive nature and culture-based experiences for visitors and;
- Ensure Traditional Owners benefit from joint management arrangements.

### **1.3 THE PLAN**

This Plan has been written for the joint management partners, to guide and support them in joint management. It is also a public document by which the public may learn about the Park, its values and management.

This Plan explains how the joint management partners will work together to look after the Park. It provides direction for operational planning and day-to-day programs. It provides for the ongoing conservation of the Park's significant natural and cultural values and continued public use and enjoyment. It shows how public interests in the Park will be best served while recognising that the Park belongs to and is of deep cultural and spiritual significance to the Traditional Owners.

This Plan sets management objectives against which the Parks and Wildlife Service, Traditional Owners and the general public may measure progress. The Plan presents both general and specific management directions with respect to the Park's purpose and current management issues. It also outlines measures that will ensure that future development of the Park is appropriate.

This Plan will be reviewed after five years with the expectation that it will remain in effect for approximately 10 years when it will be amended or replaced by a new Plan.



## 1.4 JOINT MANAGEMENT

Joint Management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service working together in order to achieve their shared goals and aspirations, exchanging their knowledge and expertise, solving problems and sharing decisions.

In 2005 the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* was amended to provide for joint management of 27 parks and reserves that were subject to the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*, often called the 'Framework Act'. The Act provided for the settlement of land and/or native title claims over these areas and created the framework for their joint management. Judbarra is one of the parks subject to the new joint management arrangements.

The land comprising Gregory National Park is held by a number of Aboriginal Land Trusts on behalf of Traditional Owners under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*. The land has been leased back to the Northern Territory for 99 years. This Joint Management Plan has force in law under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. It must also comply with several leases<sup>ii</sup> and Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs)<sup>iii</sup> registered under the *Native Title Act*.

Selected parts of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* are included in Appendix 2. Briefly, the Act defines the joint management partners of a park or reserve as the Northern Territory, or a body nominated by the Territory as its representative, and the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve.

Section 25AB of the Act states:

*The objective of joint management of a park or reserve is to jointly establish an equitable partnership to manage and maintain the park or reserve as part of a comprehensive and representative system of parks and reserves in the Territory and for the following purposes:*

- (a) Benefiting both the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve and the wider community;*
- (b) Protecting biological diversity;*
- (c) Serving visitor and community needs for education and enjoyment.*

The Act also establishes the requirements of Joint Management Plans and the role of the Land Councils in assisting joint management by representing and protecting the interests of the Traditional Owners in relation to the Park's management.

---

<sup>ii</sup> Four Leases exist for the Park – Wombardi, Winan, Nalipinkak and Bilinarra-Jutpurra.

<sup>iii</sup> Three ILUAs exist for the Park – Gregory NP (NLC), Gregory NP (CLC) and Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve.



### ***Traditional Owners***

Judbarra includes the traditional lands of several Aboriginal language groups including Ngarinyman, Karrangpurru, Malngin, Wardaman, Ngaliwurru, Nungali, Bilinara, Gurindji and Jaminjung. The area also encompasses the major boundary between Australian language families, Pama Nyungan and Non-Pama-Nyungan (Northern). The language of the south-western portion of the Park is Ngarinyman which is the northern most language of the Pama-Nyungan family in the western half of the continent. This family of language encompasses all Australian Aboriginal languages to the south of this area.

At a broad level, connection to country can be expressed in terms of an individual's membership of a 'language-owning group'. Country is said to 'hold' language. Each language originated from the Dreamings who were the creators of the specific tract of country and the first speakers of its language. Illustration of the areas of language-owning groups is provided in ceremony song texts, particularly those of major Dreamings such as Walujapi, which change language at specific hand-over points as they pass from one language-group area to the next. Belonging to a language-owning group carries with it connection to a specific tract of country, although the rights that come with this are of a general nature, such as the right to hunt and forage. Stronger decision-making and other rights over specific areas are generally held by smaller sub-groups.



*Walujapi (Black-headed python) has great spiritual significance for Indigenous people across northern Australia. Photo: © Barritt & May 2009.*

### ***Land Affiliation***

In the Aboriginal tradition of the Park area, land is divided up into 'countries' (estates) which are owned by groups of 'owners' recruited by a descent principle. Although this area encompasses many different groups the descent principle generally used in the recruitment to landholding groups is through:

- Patrilineal descent (descent from Father and Father's Father)
- Patrilineal-matrilial ('owners' from Father's Father, etc and 'workers' from Mother, Mother's Father, etc.)
- Cognatic (all descendants of a designated ancestor or group of siblings through any number of patrilineal or matrilineal ties)
- Language group (where all associated with a language identity are included)

In English the term 'Traditional Owner' is commonly used to refer to someone who is a member of the clan associated with a particular clan estate (and has a particular meaning

under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*. Estates are single, bounded areas abutting each other, with no vacant territory. However, in some cases shared responsibility can occur for areas of land on the boundaries of an estate in which there is a responsibility of two groups, where the area is shared or 'fifty' in local parlance. The boundaries of estates are not usually described by Traditional Owners in terms of a line boundary but with reference to affiliation of sites in an area. In particular, where a 'travelling dreaming' crosses the country there are recognised hand over points where responsibility for the singing of the juju (song) passes from owners of one group to owners of another. It is also important to understand for joint management purposes that Indigenous 'culture' is dynamic and adaptive and changes in owner groups can and do occur and probably have done for thousands of years through various processes of succession, fission and fusion of groups.

### *Connection to country*

The notion of Aboriginal connection to country is obviously broader than land ownership rights. It encompasses a complex and varied range of connections for both individuals and groups. These include primary customary rights and responsibilities to land established through descent principles as summarised above. It also includes rights and responsibilities attained through personal experience, such as attainment of ritual knowledge, as well as connections based on lived experience, such as having been born on country or residing for significant periods in consequence of marriage or work. The contextual significance of these different types of connections varies significantly, particularly in cross-cultural settings, making the identification of Aboriginal interests in land a complex matter.

At its most fundamental level, connection to country derives from the totemic or spiritual significance of the land and the rights and interests that this invests in the traditional owners of the land. The country we see today is believed to have been created from a primordial landscape by the actions and travels of ancestral beings (or Dreamings). These Dreamings created the unique sites and features of the land, and the plants, animals and people who inhabit and are bound to it. The proof of this history and of an individual or group's place within it, is embodied in the present by the distinct languages, sacred song texts, stories, totemic dances and designs and in specific features of the landscape (sacred sites) that are the living, transformed spiritual manifestations of the Dreamings themselves and their actions. These define the cultural divisions of language-owning groups and smaller clan or estate groups, mapping them onto the landscape and providing the 'title deeds' of membership and associated rights of ownership and custodianship responsibilities for country. It is with reference to these 'title deeds' and the rules of behaviour established by Dreamings, that Aboriginal people make the assertion that 'Aboriginal law doesn't change'.

### *Cultural change*

Relationships and connections to country *do* change over time. This can occur in response to change in the composition and stability of cultural and social groupings, change in knowledge and experience of country, and change in residential patterns. As natural socio-cultural processes they have also been externally influenced by the impacts of European invasion and occupation. The most significant historical impact was the high

death rates that occurred on the frontiers that dramatically reduced local populations and estate groups, requiring adjustments, including the merging of some groups, in order to maintain viable land-holding structures and continuity of ritual responsibilities to country. Colonisation also drastically affected the life circumstances of individuals and families, resulting in increasingly complex cultural and social connections associated with voluntary and forced changes to residential patterns. The concentration of groups into centralised station and town communities, often not the traditional countries of many of the residents, has had a significant impact on relationships and connection to country.

### *Joint Management*

In the joint management context, the Traditional Owners of the region want to incorporate their knowledge and understanding of country into the management of the Park. Of utmost importance to them is the preservation of this rich knowledge and the desire to keep it alive through the generations to come. Many Traditional Owners also recognise the opportunities that joint management brings and want to further develop park based employment opportunities for their people either through the Parks and Wildlife Service or enterprises such as tourism that provide livelihoods for their families, to maintain links with their country and to be involved in park management on a day to day basis.

### ***The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service***

The Parks and Wildlife Service is a division of the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport. It is a field-based organisation with approximately 120 Rangers supported by scientific, planning, management and administration staff. The Service is dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural values of 87 parks and reserves, while providing high-quality nature-based tourism and recreation opportunities for visitors. The Service is committed to engaging the public and working with the interests of the community.

The recent formalising of the joint management process on many Territory parks has provided for Aboriginal people to be involved in park management in a more concerted way than before. The Parks and Wildlife Service is committed to seeing that the joint management partnership grows and becomes truly equitable and that Traditional Owners benefit culturally, socially and economically from joint management.

This Joint Management Plan has been developed by the joint management partners in a positive spirit. Like the Traditional Owners of the Park, the Parks and Wildlife Service is optimistic about the future.

## 2. GOVERNANCE – MAKING JOINT MANAGEMENT WORK

*“Burrbbarni ngurramala – everybody working together.” (Traditional Owner)*

### Introduction

Joint Management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service working together to achieve their shared goals and aspirations, exchange their knowledge and expertise, solve problems and share decisions. A mutual understanding of country, Law, culture and Indigenous decision making principles are fundamental to making good joint management decisions. For the purpose of joint management, the term **governance** is defined as “the way the partners organise themselves and the rules they put in place to realise their shared vision.” It includes all aspects of partnership, communication, planning and decision-making.

Making sure that the joint management partners have a clear structure and process for making decisions is essential for good joint management. The partners are optimistic that this new way of learning and working together will improve equity in management arrangements. Both partners acknowledge that it will take time to build a strong and effective working relationship.

Joint management of the Park will be consistent with this Plan and:

- *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act;*
- *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth);*
- Aboriginal Law associated with Judbarra;
- *Bushfires Act (Northern Territory);*
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth);*
- *Heritage Conservation Act (Northern Territory);*
- ICOMOS ‘Burra Charter’;
- Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) associated with Judbarra;
- *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth);*
- *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act;*
- Northern Territory Government Park Leases associated with Judbarra.

## **Principles for Effective Governance**

- Decision-making and accountability should be equally shared.
- Time spent together on country is important for developing mutual trust, respect and understanding between the partners.
- Indigenous decision-making processes must be respected.
- Management priorities will be guided by the Park's key values.
- Planning and decision-making must incorporate risk identification and minimisation.
- Engagement and employment of Traditional Owners in management operations is central to joint management success.
- Resources are limited and must be efficiently used.
- Joint management has to be checked to see that it is working well. It is important to keep improving.
- Public support for joint management is very important.

## **2.1 PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING**

### **Background**

The vast size of Judbarra and the number of Traditional Owner groups that are involved in caring for country on the Park make the process of joint management particularly complex. It will take time to build capacity through good communication and engagement of Traditional Owners together with park rangers. Learning together through shared experiences in looking after country will help to build the partners decision-making skills over time.

Joint management provides new opportunities to make better management decisions based on a combination of Indigenous and scientific knowledge. Successful joint management relies on meaningful engagement of Traditional Owners and will be measured against achievement of the aims in this Plan and the satisfaction of the joint management partners.

For Traditional Owners of Gregory National, ensuring that appropriate senior people are involved in making decisions related to their country is fundamental. They say "you need to be able to talk to elders." On Judbarra, different groups of Traditional Owners have decision-making responsibility for different areas of the Park. Appropriately qualified staff from the Northern Land Council (NLC) and the Central Land Council (CLC) will help with the identification of those with traditional authority and other cultural interests on the Park.





*Traditional Owners will decide on their representatives for a joint management committee.*

An important aspect of Aboriginal law is that only the people who can speak for country make decisions about that country. During joint management planning three groups of Traditional Owners with rights in the south, north and far north-east respectively have discussed how joint management should work. They stressed the need for “Aboriginal people to do things for themselves on their own country, to show parks mob what they can do and talk about how they can do it together.” Traditional Owners have emphasised the importance of ensuring that decision-making structures will reflect these regions of responsibility between different groups.

Traditional Owners' values and perceptions of joint management and caring for country are strongly influenced by what they value most highly – Aboriginal Law and extended family. The ability of joint management partners to appreciate cultural difference will significantly assist the partnership and provide the basis for effective joint management and governance of the Park.

While Traditional Owners highlight the importance of involving the right people in decision-making they are also pragmatic about managing the Park effectively and utilising resources efficiently. Accordingly, decision-making will be structured so that the people whose country is affected are well informed about park operations and are involved in decisions.

Traditional Owners will be involved in all aspects of park management, including operational planning through a Joint Management Committee consisting of Parks and Wildlife staff and Traditional Owners representatives from the different areas of the Park. Both partners will need support to be meaningfully involved in decision-making.

The formation of and management through a Joint Management Committee will take some getting used to for Traditional Owners as this is not a level of management control they have been used to. Appropriate training and capacity building will be provided to ensure that Parks staff and Traditional Owners alike can jointly understand what constitutes good decision-making and exercise that responsibility well.



### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

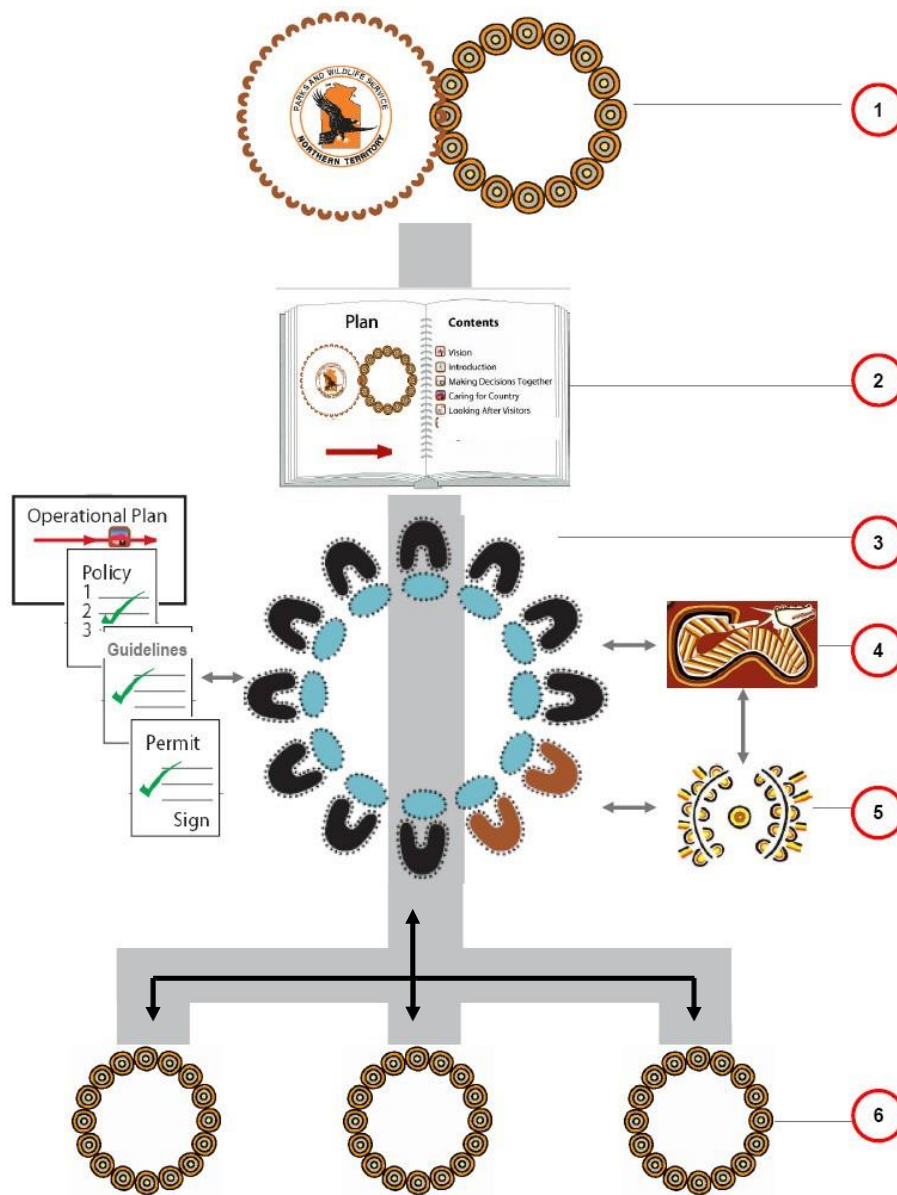
Clear roles and responsibilities are essential for joint management and each of the partners have responsibilities for looking after the Park. These are described below and reflected in **Figure 2**.

- The **Parks and Wildlife Service** has been nominated by the Territory as its representative as the joint management partner with the Park's Traditional Owners. Parks and Wildlife is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Park under the direction of the Joint Management Committee. The Parks and Wildlife Service is required to finance and resource the Park's ongoing management including administrative functions, staffing, infrastructure and services. Parks and Wildlife employees are responsible to the Minister for Parks and Wildlife and the head of the Department.
- **Traditional Owners** are responsible to the land, Law and culture. Their views and wishes are essential to the direction and management of the Park. Core members of landholding groups have responsibilities for decision making and overseeing cultural protocol. Traditional Owners also have responsibilities for managing traditional knowledge and passing it on to the right people, looking after the land and its resources, maintaining sacred sites and keeping the country alive.
- The **Joint Management Committee** will be the principal decision making body for the Park and its functions are to: ensure that information is shared with all Traditional Owners; review progress against management directions in this Plan; review satisfaction of the partners; develop, review and provide advice regarding policies and procedures; set direction and approve Operational Plans each year. The Committee is responsible to the Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service and the wider community.
- The **Northern Land Council** and **Central Land Council** are independent statutory bodies created under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*, responsible for consulting with and protecting the interests of Traditional Owners of the Park. They will support the process of joint management including the functioning of the Joint Management Committee.

### ***Monitoring Joint Management and Building Effective Governance***

The Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Service know that the partnership will need to keep growing and improving through commitment and new skills in governance. Monitoring the partnership and progress against the aims in this Plan is important to build effective joint management and a strong partnership. Good governance will develop from the shared experience. Traditional Owners have said "we'll know when joint management is working when we start to see things happening rather than just talking."

Figure 2 Roles and Responsibilities.



- 1 Joint Management Partners**  
The Parks and Wildlife Service and the Traditional Owners of Gregory National Park.
- 2 Joint Management Plan**  
An agreement between the Joint Management Partners about managing the Park together.
- 3 Joint Management Committee**  
A representative body that will meet at least once a year to review progress and ratify annual operational plans, policy, guidelines and permits. They are responsible for providing information to the wider Traditional Owner group.
- 4 Northern Land Council**  
A statutory body responsible for consulting with and protecting the interests of Traditional Owners.
- 5 Central Land Council**  
A statutory body responsible for consulting with and protecting the interests of Traditional Owners.
- 6 Local Management Areas**  
Three different groups of Traditional Owners with rights and responsibilities in the north, north-east and south of the Park provide direction to the Joint Management Committee.

## Aims

- Successful governance through a committed and effective partnership focussed on results and based on equity, accountability, strong communication and understanding between Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Service staff.
- Partners that are satisfied with the processes and outcomes of joint management.

## Management Directions

**2.1 Joint Management Committee** – a committee will be established as the governing body for the Park. The committee will meet at least once each year. In time, membership will consist of two senior Parks and Wildlife officers and up to 12 Traditional Owners as follows: four representatives from the Ngaliwurru, Wulayi and Ngarinyman groups, four representatives from the Wardaman, Karrangpuru and Nungali groups and four representatives from the Bilinara, Ngarinyman, Gurindji and Jaminjung groups. Traditional Owners will decide who will represent them and who can speak for areas of country. Traditional Owner representation on the committee will include a mix of women, men, young people and old people. A minimum of twelve representatives (four from each area) and two park staff will be required at key meetings.

**2.2 Making decisions** – The joint management partners will share decision-making equitably and responsibly according to the framework outlined in **Table 1**.

Decisions will be made in the three **Local Management Areas (Figure 2)** and ratified by the Joint Management Committee. The NLC/CLC will ensure the appropriate people are consulted. The partners have developed guidelines for the four levels of decisions required for management of Judbarra (see **Appendix 3**).

Decisions regarding operational planning and permit approvals will be made by consensus, based on the directions of this Plan, the Park Zoning Scheme, Departmental policies and locally developed policy and guidelines. Decision making will be inclusive of others who have an interest or who may contribute to more informed management.

**2.3 Dispute resolution** – The joint management partners will aim to resolve disputes through open discussion and consensus at the Joint Management Committee level. However, should a dispute arise between the joint management partners which cannot be resolved, the partners will follow the dispute resolution process set out in the Leases.

**2.4 Supporting and building effective governance** – The partners and the NLC/CLC recognise that joint management will be a process of continuous learning and growth. The partners' capacity to be effective in shared decision-making will develop through experience within the partnership. As experience in Joint Management grows the partners may agree to other governance arrangements not detailed in this Plan, to aid effective and efficient management.

Support and training will be provided to the partners in communication, partnership, planning and governance. Permanent camps will be established for Joint Management meetings as well as “back to country” trips. The partners will be pro-active in engaging the local community and key stakeholders through established communication networks and forums.

The capacity of the joint management partners will be enhanced by:

- **Governance training** – Governance training will be provided to the joint management partners to give them the tools and skills to work effectively in the partnership.
- **Professional development** – Professional standards and staff competencies will be supported by ongoing training in all aspects of park management with special emphasis on cross-cultural training run by Traditional Owners and other providers.
- **Information exchange** – Park staff will be responsible for ensuring that information about park management programs and other significant activities are communicated effectively to Traditional Owners. The Joint Management Committee, with the assistance of the Land Councils and the Parks and Wildlife Service will be responsible for ensuring that information is effectively communicated to the wider Traditional Owner group, local community and key stakeholders. Information bulletins will be trialled.
- **Community based Junior Ranger program** – The partners will engage the local community through a jointly planned and delivered community education program. The Junior Ranger program will focus on Traditional Owners and their families to build joint management capacity and support from an early age.
- **Performance monitoring** – A monitoring and evaluation program will be developed collaboratively by the partners and implemented as a high priority to develop effective governance. Performance and satisfaction of the joint management partners will be measured annually using indicators relating to: the effectiveness of the joint management partnership (including decision-making processes); the implementation of annually agreed priorities and; the achievement of Aims stated in this Plan.



*Community based junior ranger programs will assist in meeting the long term aims of joint management.*

**Table 1: Decision Making Framework.**

	<b>Joint Management Committee</b>	<b>Parks Staff</b>
<b>Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise executive authority and be accountable for the management of the Park.</li> <li>• Set direction for park management programs for parks staff to implement.</li> <li>• Endorse annual allocation of budgets to programs.</li> <li>• Set policy and procedure.</li> <li>• Endorse commercial and development proposals.</li> <li>• Monitor and evaluate management performance.</li> <li>• Seek direction from Traditional Owners of Local Management Areas.</li> <li>• Engage as necessary with stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day to day management of the Park.</li> <li>• Implement programs, policy and procedure as approved by the committee.</li> <li>• Maximise on-ground participation of Traditional Owners in management of the Park.</li> </ul>
<b>Types of Decisions and how they will be made</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve annual Operational Plans relating to biodiversity, fire, feral animals, weeds and visitor management.</li> <li>• Consultation with community and wider group of Traditional Owners as appropriate.</li> <li>• Committee may delegate tasks to working / advisory groups or groups of Traditional Owners who can speak for the affected country.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routine activities and program implementation as approved.</li> <li>• Issue permits according to policy and procedure.</li> </ul>

## **2.2 BUSINESS OPERATIONS**

### **Background**

Employment and economic opportunities for Traditional Owners are central to joint management arrangements and joint management success. If the partnership is working well, outcomes will include jobs and training for Traditional Owners, healthy country and satisfied visitors. Meaningful participation of Traditional Owners in all aspects of park management is essential for an equitable partnership and successful joint management.

Joint management will thrive with the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge into many aspects of the Park’s management. The partners recognise it is important that Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP) is protected by Departmental policy agreed to by the joint management partners.

The joint management partnership is accountable to the community, recognising that the Park is a public asset. This section summarises a commitment to the public interest and to fostering constructive partnerships with neighbours and other stakeholders.

### ***Indigenous Training, Employment and Business Opportunities***

It is important that joint management provides opportunities and helps support sustainable livelihoods for Traditional Owner families. Many Traditional Owners live on communities and outstations across the Victoria River District. Some have expressed interest in pursuing Aboriginal Living Areas, similar to Bob's Yard and Barrac Barrac located within the Park.

Throughout the joint management planning process, the Traditional Owners emphasised the importance of accredited training and employment for their families and acknowledged their responsibility to support young people. They look forward to new opportunities in working on country and applying their skills and knowledge to look after the Park. They also recognise that they will benefit from support if they are able to take up new opportunities created through joint management.

The Parks and Wildlife Service will make every effort to increase the employment of Aboriginal people at Judbarra, in accordance with employment laws and policies in force in the Northern Territory. The Parks and Wildlife Service has previously employed Aboriginal people as rangers at Judbarra. There are currently two Indigenous trainee ranger positions based at Timber Creek. Helping local people develop the skills needed to work as Rangers is critical. In the long term the benefit will be a Park that is staffed with Rangers who have a practical and culturally-based, long-term commitment to looking after the area.

Since the establishment of new joint management arrangements, Traditional Owners have participated in paid park management programs. Flexible, project based employment provides many benefits including work experience, skills exchange, accredited training and helps build positive working relationships between Traditional Owners and Parks staff. It helps Traditional Owners become work-ready and local Aboriginal organisations including community ranger groups contract-ready.

Flexible employment arrangements can be expanded to effectively engage Traditional Owners from across the Park. Ensuring that the necessary administrative arrangements are in place is critical in providing equal work opportunities for all Traditional Owners. In the past various projects have been contracted to organisations such as the Ngaliwurru-wuli Aboriginal Association and the Timber Creek Town Council. The Victoria Daly Shire established in July 2008 has an important role in community relations and the development of opportunities for locals.

It is important to acknowledge that the broader employment aspirations of Traditional Owners and their families cannot be met by joint management alone. There are only a few permanent ranger positions at Judbarra. Consequently, employment and training plans established by the partners will need to be developed within a local and regional context and involve other sections of government, groups and organisations. Traditional Owners identified a range of employment opportunities during planning meetings including: Park and community rangers, tour guides, apprenticeships and family businesses.

While most maintenance on the Park is carried out by Rangers, contractors are occasionally engaged for works projects and services. Traditional Owners are keen to be involved in contract work. Traditional Owners and Aboriginal organisations they support will be given preference to contracts for services where they have demonstrated the capacity to meet contract requirements and subject to any law in force in the Northern Territory.



Where capacity is lacking, the partners will encourage interested Traditional Owners to undertake training and pursue apprenticeships, helping them gain skills and accreditation required. The potential contracting opportunities on the Park include visitor facility construction and maintenance, fencing, track work, weed management, feral animal management and campground management.

*Maintenance of visitor areas can be contracted to Traditional Owners.*



### ***Effective Resource Use***

Judbarra is the largest park managed by the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service and has significant Aboriginal, natural, historical and tourism values. The majority of funding to manage the Park and develop services and facilities is provided by the Northern Territory Government, allocated as a share of funds to manage this Park and all other parks and reserves across the Northern Territory system. The Northern and Central Land Councils also make significant contributions to a wide range of joint management activities. Minor and major capital works programs are subject to whole of government and Departmental priorities.

Parks and Wildlife have been working to prioritise the allocation of resources across the Northern Territory Parks estate. The values of each park have been individually assessed and scored against standard criteria for their contribution to biodiversity and cultural site conservation, recreation and tourism. The results of this process rate Judbarra as deserving the highest level of protection. The partners recognise the opportunity to explore external funding sources and public/private partnerships in order to augment core funding and enhance management programs.

The main park headquarters is located in Timber Creek, where office and workshop facilities, as well as government housing for staff is supplied. Management facilities and staff accommodation are also located at Bullita. At the time of this Plan's preparation, there are eight Ranger positions on the, as well as two Indigenous trainee Ranger positions. Ongoing staff training is important to maintain and develop competent and professional park staff. Training in cross-cultural communication and governance are high priorities.

Volunteers have provided invaluable contributions to management programs on the Park over recent years. The partners are keen to continue this arrangement, providing it does not compromise Traditional Owners' opportunities for work.

Effective use of limited resources hinges on integrated operational planning. All Operational Plans are developed and reviewed annually in which priority actions are

identified against available management resources. These plans will include biodiversity conservation, weeds, fire, feral animals, visitors and cultural heritage. Annual fire, weed and feral animal plans are based on long-term strategies of five years or more. Co-ordination and integration into a prioritised, annual Operational Plan, based on protection of core values is essential to maximise resource use and efficiency.



*Planning together will ensure country is looked after properly.*

The joint management partners have a statutory obligation to protect the values of the Park and a duty of care to park visitors. Risk identification, assessment, prioritisation and threat abatement should be incorporated into annual Operational Plans.

It is important to acknowledge there are currently limited opportunities for rangers and Traditional Owners to work in the south of the Park due to the distance from infrastructure and low tourist visitation. The partners recognise a need to increase opportunities for management work and access into this area. Due to the special cultural sensitivities of this part of the Park, this will best be achieved with the direct involvement of senior Traditional Owners as well as the development of Community Ranger groups to the south of the Park.

### ***Research, Survey and Monitoring***

Decisions for management of the Park are enhanced with good information about the Park's values, environmental trends and the effectiveness of management actions. This information is sought through research, survey and monitoring programs generally carried out as internal projects by the Parks and Wildlife Service or its Department. Research is also carried out by external agencies or individuals and associated activities such as interfering with wildlife and taking, interfering or keeping protected wildlife requires a permit issued under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. Local research guidelines are required to assist the permit approvals process. Research is most strongly encouraged when resulting knowledge is expected to contribute to improved management and where no marked impact on the Park's values is expected.

Targeted research is likely to benefit the partners and their ability to manage the Park more effectively.

Monitoring data on visitor numbers, demographics, behaviour and satisfaction is used to guide visitor management, including planning and design of facilities and interpretive programs. This data can also be useful to inform Traditional Owners interested in developing tourism enterprises.

Traditional Owners have knowledge of the Park that may contribute to research outcomes. It is important that they are consulted and invited to participate in research, survey and monitoring projects and, where possible, employed in this work. Research outcomes must be communicated clearly to the partners and the intellectual property rights of Traditional Owners protected.

### ***Permitting special activities and development***

Permits issued under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* are required for activities that involve special access or use of any part of the Park and for commercial purposes. This includes: research, public gatherings, commercial tourism, aircraft operation and commercial film and photography. Permits are issued with conditions by which permit holders must abide to minimise negative impacts on the values of the Park and other park users. It is important that the permit application and approvals process is clear, consistent and efficient. The Joint Management Committee will be responsible for developing practical local guidelines for commercial activities. Activities authorised under some permits may require supervision.

A permit is required for commercial activities involving special access or use of the Park. In granting permits to carry on a trade or commerce in Judbarra, the Northern Territory Government must give preference to the participation of traditional Aboriginal owners of the Park in any commercial activities conducted under the Lease, subject to any relevant laws in force in the Northern Territory. Traditional Owners would like to explore business opportunities including cultural tours and sales of arts and crafts. Current tourism operations include a boat tour running from the Big Horse Campground working within an Operational Agreement that sets out the rights and obligations of the concessionaire.

Additionally, where a secure form of land tenure is needed for the occupation or specific use of an area, a licence or sub-lease may be issued with the approval of the relevant Aboriginal Land Trust and endorsement of the Joint Management Committee. Any licence or sub-lease must be consistent with the provisions set under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* and the relevant Park Lease. A Telstra sub-lease within the eastern sector of the Park has been approved and once formalised will remain in effect until November 2026.

Tour operators can have a strong influence on visitors' experiences of the Park. Tour companies visiting Northern Territory parks require a permit under the Tour Operator Permit System, introduced in April 2006. The Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service want visitor information given by tour operators to be accurate and appropriate. The Tour Operator Permit System provides a means for the joint management partners to better liaise with tour operators, and to monitor the activities of tour groups.

Development proposals must be consistent with Departmental policies and subject to appropriate assessment to ensure that natural, cultural and historical values are not impacted. Protection for cultural sites is provided by the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern*

*Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*, the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* as well as the *Heritage Conservation Act*. Significant developments may be subject to the *Environmental Assessment Act* and the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*.

### ***Mining***

Mining and extractive activities have the potential to adversely impact the natural and cultural values of the Park. A small number of gravel pits exist on Park. Several applications for exploration licences over the Western section of the Park are due to expire by 2012. Under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*, Traditional Owners have the right to control mining on Aboriginal Land. The transfer of the Park to Aboriginal Freehold requires the partners to re-apply for Reservation from Occupation under the *Mining Act* to protect areas of the Park with significant natural, Aboriginal or historic values from mining.

### ***Maintaining a positive public profile***

Media coverage and other forms of promotion can help build public support for the Park with flow-on benefits to the partners and the Northern Territory. Departmental Commercial Film and Photography policy and locally developed guidelines will ensure the Park is promoted properly without compromising the Park values.

Accurate promotion and marketing of the Park gives visitors appropriate expectations. It also influences visitor numbers, behaviour, safety and satisfaction. Traditional Owners have expressed a desire for local names of country to be used throughout the different regions of the Park.



*A permit is required for professional film and photography.*

### ***Relations with Community and Neighbours***

Park neighbours and the wider community have been involved in the management of the Park for many years. Joint management arrangements will not change this situation. The Park is a public asset and the partners are jointly accountable to the community. Managing issues and influences beyond the Park boundary and promoting cooperation with neighbours will enhance land management programs.

The size and remoteness of the Park reinforces the importance of working closely with neighbours and other stakeholders. The Park borders the township of Timber Creek as



well as a number of Aboriginal Land Trusts, military lands and pastoral lands (see **Appendix 1**). The Wardaman people are planning to develop an Indigenous Protected Area that could share the northern border of the Park.

The Territory Eco-link is a long-term Northern Territory Government initiative to link parks from the tropical savannahs of the Top End to the desert of the Central Australia through a network of public and voluntary private conservation arrangements. Judbarra is a vital link in the conservation corridor. This landscape scale partnership approach to conservation will assist conservation efforts by allowing ecosystems to adapt to climate change, whilst enhancing regional tourism and development.

Matters of mutual concern between park management and neighbours include fencing, boundary access, control of stock and feral animals, weed control, fire management and to some extent, visitor access and safety. Due to its rugged terrain much of the Park is unfenced and management cannot be strictly aligned with park boundaries. This has led to the establishment of a “working boundary” with some neighbours.

The wider community and stakeholder groups such as Tourism NT, Tourism Top End and the wider tourism industry, Community Ranger Groups, Threatened Species Network, Greening Australia and the Victoria River District Conservation Association have interests in the Park. It is important that the partners build good working relationships with these groups and other agencies.

## **Aims**

- The Management Directions in this Plan achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities.
- An increase in the number of permanent and casual Indigenous staff employed on the Park.
- Traditional Owners benefiting economically through employment and business relating to the Park.
- An improved knowledge base for informing decisions on Park.
- A community that is engaged in, and supportive of joint management.

## **Management Directions**

**2.5 Indigenous training, employment and enterprise development** – A program for training, employment and enterprise development will be determined by the partners each year and reviewed annually, based on Traditional Owners’ interests and capacity and a Departmental Indigenous Employment and Training Strategy. The Parks and Wildlife Service and the Land Councils will ensure that where they cannot directly assist, accredited training and business development support is provided to Traditional Owners through co-ordination with relevant agencies.

- **Indigenous employment opportunities** – The partners will continue to identify and provide opportunities for flexible and direct employment and training for Aboriginal people across all sectors of the Park. The Aboriginal Ranger traineeship program will continue as a means to increase opportunities for local people to become Rangers.

- **Contract services** – Traditional Owners and Aboriginal organisations they support will be given preference to contracts where they have demonstrated capacity and subject to any applicable laws. Contractors providing training and employment to local Aboriginal people will be strongly encouraged to apply.
- **Tourism** – Traditional Owners will continue to be encouraged to take up commercial tourism opportunities including camp fire talks, campground maintenance, cultural tours or other viable enterprises. Appropriate support will be provided and agencies such as the Land Councils and Tourism NT will assist with developing ideas and identifying service providers to support the development of business plans, skills and funding sources. The joint management partners will liaise with the tourism industry through established forums and organisations as required (see **2.17** and **3.23**).

**2.6 Operational Plans** – Prioritised Operational Plans will be developed annually based on protection of the Park's core values and assessment of risks or threats to them.

The joint management partners will have a shared role in the annual planning and review of management programs and Operational Plans for the Park. Operational Planning will pay particular attention to:

- The vision, principles, core values, aims and directions of this Plan.
- Incorporating Indigenous knowledge and priorities into park management programs.
- Regional priorities, available resources and external funding options.
- Maximising paid Traditional Owner participation in on-ground programs.
- Listening and responding to concerns raised by the partners and the public.
- Integrating Operational Plans.
- Encouraging and supporting local business.

**2.7 Financing** – The Parks and Wildlife Service will finance and resource the Park's ongoing management including administrative functions, staff, infrastructure and services. Partnerships with private industry for the provision of infrastructure and visitor services will be encouraged and considered by the partners. External funding will be sought for specific projects.

**2.8 Living areas, subleases and expansion of the Park** – Proposals for living areas, subleases or expansion of the Park will be considered initially by the joint management partners through the Joint Management Committee and the relevant Aboriginal Land Trust. Wider consultation and full consideration of the issues will take place as appropriate. Living Areas and subleases will be subject to the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*, relevant Park Lease, Departmental Policy and local guidelines developed by the partners and environmental impact assessment.

**2.9 Permits – Delegated Senior Rangers** can endorse standard permit applications that involve an approved activity, require no special access, are low impact and in keeping with Traditional Owners wishes. The **Joint Management Committee** will develop local guidelines for assessing special access or activity permits.

- The Committee or affected Traditional Owners may be convened to consider applications if an activity or permit application involves special access or activities.



Traditional Owners from the affected area must be consulted (see **2.2**).

- Activities or proposals that are culturally sensitive, large or complex, or part of a major commercial project will require the Committee to fully consider all details before passing the application to the **Traditional Owners** affected by the proposal. Preference will be given to commercial activities that benefit Traditional Owners.
- Any proposal involving significant disturbance of new ground, Aboriginal archaeological sites or Declared Heritage Places will be referred to the Environment and Heritage division to aid decision-making or set development guidelines and will require a clearance from the relevant Land Council (see **3.5** and **3.6**).

#### **2.10 Research, survey and monitoring**

- **Scientific research, survey and monitoring** – Programs will be described in Operational Plans and be subject to annual review and local guidelines developed by the joint management partners. Indigenous knowledge components will be incorporated in project objectives and outcomes where appropriate. Research, survey or monitoring by an external proponent will require a permit that encourages Traditional Owner involvement and complies with Departmental Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property policy and locally developed guidelines (see **3.4**). The partners will request plain English summaries of any external research conducted on the Park.
- **Visitor monitoring** – Visitor monitoring projects will be determined by the partners. Visitors will be counted with traffic counters or other reliable means. Qualitative surveys will be conducted on a five year basis or as required. Visitor comments sheets will continue to be collected and considered, as appropriate. Data will be used by the joint management partners for planning and decision-making (see **3.15**).
- **Park Reporting** – Every five years, the partners will review the implementation of this Plan and prepare a State of The Park Report, reporting on the condition of key values and recommending adaptive changes to management if appropriate. This process may also contribute to State of the Environment Reporting.

**2.11 Excavation, mining and exploration** – Soil and gravel will be extracted for soil conservation works in the Park with the approval of the partners, the Environment and Heritage Division and clearances by the relevant Land Council.

- External requests for excavation will require a written application that will be subject to the approval of the joint management partners and any law in the Northern Territory. The partners will need to consider the terms of approval including conditions of site rehabilitation and adequate compensations to the Aboriginal Land Trust.
- The partners will seek to protect selected areas of the Park from mining by applying for it to be Reserved from Occupation.
- Traditional Owners have the right to gather ochre under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*.
- Fossicking will not be allowed.

**2.12 Community engagement** – Neighbours and local stakeholders will be encouraged to work with the joint management partners in matters of mutual interest, planning strategically with the partners in conservation and tourism matters, resolving issues and

developing opportunities including those that are related to the Park's interests, but lie outside its boundary.

- The Northern Territory Government will continue to work in partnership with private landholders in linking Judbarra to conservation corridors as part of the **Territory Eco-link** initiative. Participating private landowners will be offered government assistance through partnership agreements.
- The established **volunteer** program will continue on the basis that it will not compromise or compete with Traditional Owners' aspirations or opportunities (see **3.23**).
- Park staff will regularly liaise with neighbours to support cooperative management in the use and control of fire, control of stock and feral animals, weed control and soil conservation across tenures (see **3.16**). It may be necessary to establish/maintain practical working boundaries due to the rugged terrain of the area. Integrated, regional community partnerships will be encouraged with particular emphasis on adjoining landholders and established community ranger groups. The partners may consider developing a "control area" with neighbours where cooperative management for certain threats such as weeds and feral animals is applied.
- The partners will work with relevant agencies to ensure park images and messages are accurate and appropriate (see **3.21**). Traditional Owners will retain ownership of their **Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property** and control the use of cultural information in keeping with standard policy developed between the partners and the NLC/CLC (see **3.4**). Parks will ensure that staff have an adequate understanding of issues regarding the ownership of intellectual and cultural property.

**2.13 A new name for Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve** – The Joint Management Committee will consider changing the name of Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve to reflect Aboriginal ownership. If agreed by the partners, a dual naming system will be used according to departmental policy.

## **PARK ZONING**

### **Background**

The Park is managed for multiple purposes, including nature conservation, protection of cultural and historical values and provision for a range of visitor experiences. Different areas of the Park however, will usually be managed accordingly with greater emphasis on one purpose. A zoning scheme is a general summary of the purpose and focus of management for all areas of the Park based on the specific values of those areas and their level of visitor access and facility development.

The zoning scheme indicates management intent at the time of this Plan's preparation. It is not intended to be a basis for regulation of access or development and may be changed during the term of this Plan to provide for improved protection of values and / or enhancement of visitor opportunities.

Some highly visited areas within the Park are also places of Aboriginal cultural sensitivity. The partners may need to review visitor access and activities in these places and consider options with the tourism industry.

### **Aim**

- Park values protected whilst providing for public access and enjoyment.

### **Management Directions**

**2.14 Zoning** – Management of the Park will be in accordance with the zoning scheme outlined in **Table 3** and shown in **Figure 3**.

**2.15 Special Protection Areas** – Areas of exceptional conservation or cultural significance include Big Horse, Bullita, Barrac Barrac, Jasper Gorge, Limestone Gorge and areas in the south of the Park (see **Figure 3**). Such areas will be subject to special attention with regards to conservation and cultural heritage management programs. Additional special protection areas may be designated or extended during the life of this Plan with the approval of the Joint Management Committee.

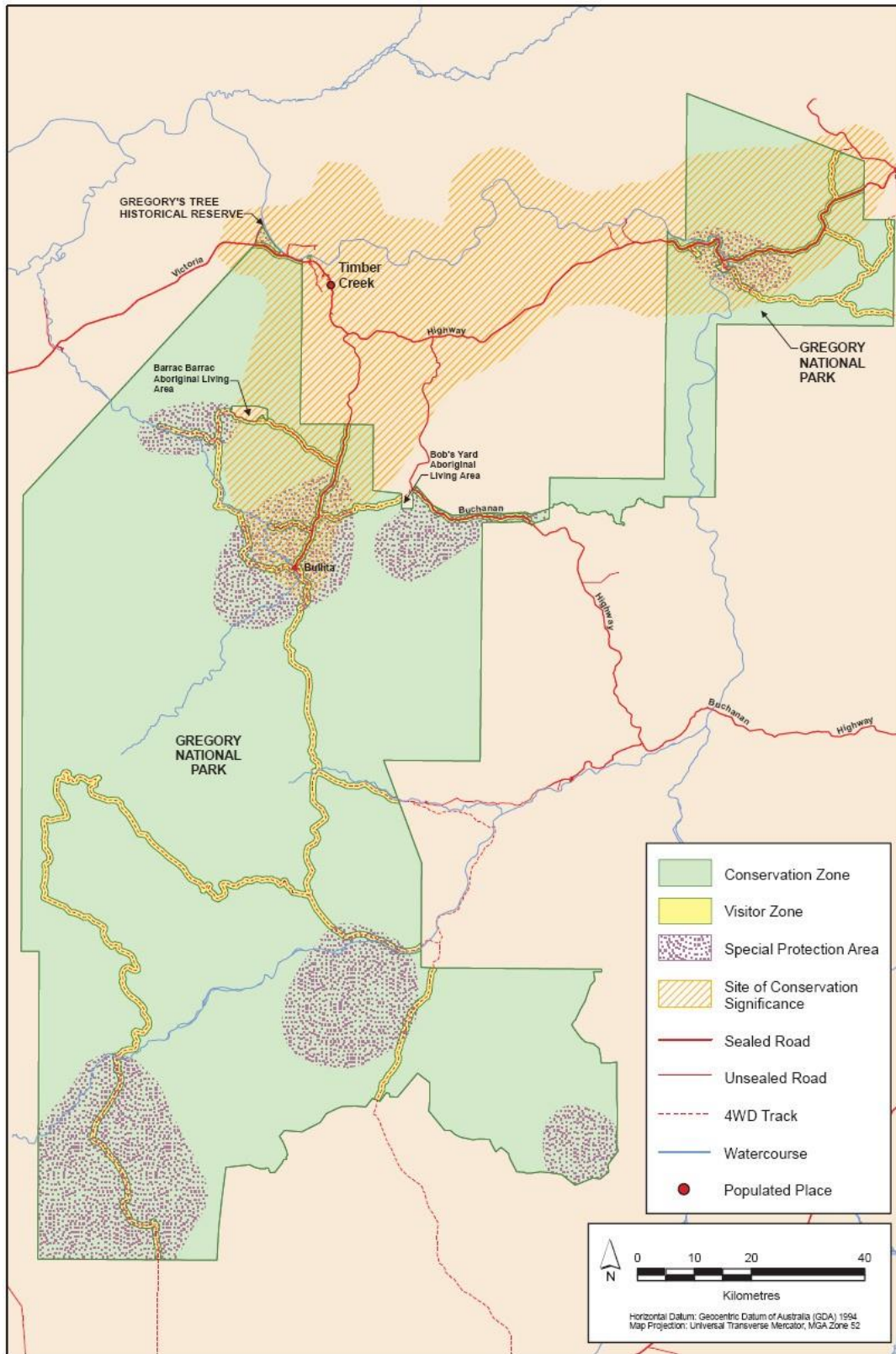
**2.16 Development** - Regardless of the designated zone all management and development will proceed with maintenance of the Park's natural character and conservation values as a priority. Any new development will be subject to the approval of the partners and appropriate environmental, sacred site and cultural heritage clearances and protection measures (see **2.15, 3.5, 3.6, 3.14, 3.15** and **3.20**).

**2.17 Visitor Zone Review** – Visitor access and activities will be reviewed in culturally sensitive areas with relevant Traditional Owners (see **3.1**). Local interests and the tourism industry will be consulted with regard to proposed change and development of alternative experiences (see **2.5** and **2.15**). Zoning will be amended or special conditions applied where necessary in relevant Conservation Management Plans (see **3.8**).

**Table 3. Zoning Scheme Summary**

	<b>Visitor Zone</b>	<b>Conservation Zone</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentrated visitor use whilst minimising negative impacts.</li> <li>• Provision for significant future development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of natural and/or cultural values</li> </ul>
<b>Management Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance and presentation of visitor facilities, information, interpretation and visitor safety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land conservation programs; fire, weed and feral animal management.</li> <li>• Research.</li> <li>• Maintenance of management facilities and services.</li> </ul>
<b>Visitor Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conventional and four- wheel drive vehicle access.</li> <li>• Boat access to Victoria River.</li> <li>• Marked walking tracks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overnight hiking by permit only or in connection with approved concession.</li> <li>• Public access to Bullita ranger station for business and emergency contact only.</li> </ul>
<b>Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Picnicking, walking, nature appreciation and photography, four-wheel driving, fishing, boating, camping (and canoeing within approved concession).</li> <li>• Interpretation of park values.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management and cultural activities.</li> <li>• Self-reliant bush walking, research and commercial tourism (including bush camping) under permit.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking, picnic, camping, emergency and boat ramp facilities.</li> <li>• Toilets, walkways and viewing platforms.</li> <li>• Shade shelters, visitor information and interpretive walks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranger/ joint management base.</li> <li>• Other management facilities necessary to protect key values.</li> <li>• General provision for nature or culture based tourism under terms of concession permit.</li> <li>• Major tourism development will be subject to public comment.</li> </ul>

**Figure 3. Park Zoning Map**

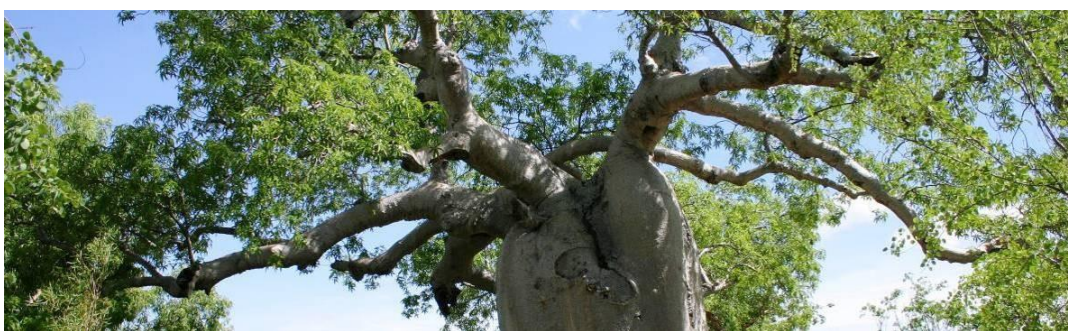


### 3. MANAGING THE PARK'S VALUES

Judbarra is valued by the joint management partners and the wider community for its internationally significant species diversity, rich Aboriginal, historic and pastoral associations and dramatic scenery. This Plan encourages the joint management partners and the wider community to work together to conserve the Park's rich natural, Aboriginal and historical values.

This section of the Plan relates to the management of the Park as:

- A diverse and shared cultural landscape;
- An internationally significant conservation area; and
- A remote and unique tourist attraction.



*Boab trees throughout the Park have great natural, cultural, historical and interpretation value.*

#### 3.1 MANAGING COUNTRY

##### Introduction

Joint management brings a new way of looking at managing country. Under customary Law, Aboriginal people and land are seen as one, and country is defined by sites and dreamings not as clearly bound entities. Traditional Owners of Judbarra have an obligation to protect and maintain their ancestral homelands within the Park and beyond its boundary.

Traditional Owners respect the land and their ancestors by performing ceremonies on country and passing spiritual and ecological knowledge onto their descendants. Caring also entails visiting, managing and watching the country, moving appropriately on it, and passing knowledge onto family.

Caring for country in a joint management context requires cross-cultural awareness and good communication, to ensure that country is looked after properly in a way that involves both partners combining western science and Indigenous ecological knowledge and priorities. It is critical that Traditional Owners are afforded every opportunity to continue and strengthen their relationships with, and management of country.



## Principles for Managing Country

- Managing country means working together on country to look after the natural and cultural values.
- Management should protect and enhance park values.
- Traditional Owners' management and practice of cultural knowledge is integral to managing country.
- Impacts of wildfire, weeds and feral animals should be minimised.
- Cultural heritage conservation follows the guidance of the Burra Charter.

### 3.1.1 ABORIGINAL AND HISTORICAL VALUES

#### Background

Judbarra is a rich and complex living cultural landscape. The Park also has an exceptional historical heritage that is shared by its original inhabitants and new-comers. The Park encompasses the traditional homelands of several Indigenous language groups including Ngarinyman, Karrangpurru, Malngin, Wardaman, Ngaliwurru, Nungali, Bilinara, Gurindji and Jaminjung. For thousands of years, these ancient peoples have worked together to maintain the spiritual and physical integrity of their lands. Early decades of exploration and pastoral settlement were marked by both conflict and co-operation, and tangible reminders of this exist today.

#### ***Aboriginal Cultural Values***

The Aboriginal cultural values of the Park are of outstanding regional and national significance. Under laws from the Dreaming or creation time, the Traditional Owners of the Park are responsible for country and are obliged to maintain and protect it. Under Aboriginal law, Traditional Owners have responsibility for maintaining and protecting their country. They maintain the integrity of their ancestral homelands by following and teaching religious and ecological knowledge from the Dreaming to their children.

Traditional Owners use areas of the Park for hunting, fishing and the collection of traditional resources such as bush tucker, medicines, fibre, ochre, and timber. Access to the land and its resources is critical for Traditional Owners to exercise their responsibilities in relation to land, law and culture.

*Accessing country with young people is important for keeping culture alive.*



Although many Traditional Owners live on the Park or in close proximity to the Park, there is generally a desire for more access across the Park for traditional purposes including “hunting, fishing, looking for goanna, bush honey, turtle, catfish, bream, bush turkey, kangaroo, water lily, onion and tiny lily that grows on dry land.” Traditional Owners say their “young people need to be trained with old people to make sure it’s done properly.”

A considerable amount of research has been conducted in relation to the Aboriginal culture of the Victoria River District and the Park area. This includes detailed studies of land ownership and connection to country, archaeological and anthropological studies, recordings of oral histories, and Indigenous ecological knowledge projects. Information collected from Traditional Owners on the history and cultural values of the Park must be properly stored and archived so that information of a personal and culturally restricted nature is protected and Traditional Owner access is assured.

The partners support the establishment and maintenance of an actively-held body of Aboriginal cultural knowledge controlled by the Traditional Owners of the Park. Repatriation of Aboriginal cultural information and stories and their appropriate archiving will be an important part of protecting the cultural values of the Park. There are many aspects of cultural information that Traditional Owners are willing to share with visitors.

Cultural knowledge held by Traditional Owners is vulnerable due to the declining number of older people with extensive direct knowledge and experience of country, cultural sites and associated ritual knowledge. Effective long term joint management will require a body of culturally-knowledgeable Traditional Owners far into the future and well beyond the present generation of senior Traditional Owners. Intergenerational knowledge transfer via on-country visits involving senior Traditional Owners and younger generations will be a priority and the partners will need to establish mechanisms to support this.

### ***Archaeological Sites***

Archaeological sites are abundant throughout the Park. The majority of sites are relatively undisturbed and located in remote areas of the Park, inaccessible to the public. These include surface scatters, stone tools and blades, ochre quarries, burial sites, old earth ovens, stone arrangements, stone bird-hunting hides, fish traps, rock shelter occupation deposits and numerous rock art sites.

The rock shelters and caves of Judbarra support a wealth of rock art. Much of the rock art of this region appears to represent an art province quite distinct from other areas. Recorded techniques include painting, stencilling, drawing, printing, pecking and pounding, with human figure motifs being most common. The very high number of composite engraved and painted figures is one of the most prolific sites in Australia.

Prescribed Aboriginal Archaeological Places and Objects on the Park are protected under the *Heritage Conservation Act*. Several sites are considered significant, however there has been no proper assessment of their significance and heritage value across the broader region. It is important that archaeological sites are protected from visitor impacts. Traditional Owners say “the right Traditional Owners need to introduce rangers and strangers to country” to ensure sites of cultural significance are respected and protected.

Archaeological evidence dates occupation from at least 20,000 years ago.



### **Sacred Sites**

Numerous registered and recorded Aboriginal Sacred Areas occur throughout the Park. Protection for places that are of cultural significance in the Northern Territory is afforded under overlapping legislation. The Commonwealth *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* gives legal recognition to areas which that Act terms “sacred sites” and defines as:

*“a site that is sacred to Aboriginals or is otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal tradition, and includes any land that, under a law of the Northern Territory, is declared to be sacred to Aboriginals or of significance according to Aboriginal tradition”. The ALRA makes it an offence to enter or remain on land that is a sacred site.*

Complementary Northern Territory legislation, the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act (NTASSA)* also provides protection for all sites that fall within the scope of this definition. This protection is generally provided in the form of an Authority Certificate from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) in response to land use proposals. It means that the traditional Aboriginal owners have an enforceable right to say who enters their sacred sites, and what cannot happen on their sacred sites. Illegal entry, works on or use of a sacred site is an offence under the NTASSA.

Strong joint management will ensure that sacred sites are protected in accordance with Traditional Owners’ wishes. Under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)* the Northern Land Council and Central Land Council has a specific function to “assist Aboriginals in the taking of measures likely to assist in the protection of sacred sites” and under its established procedures will carry out this role in facilitating joint management.

### **Historic Sites**

Many events of historical interest have occurred within the Park giving it considerable historical value. These values are focused around the Park as a site of contact between Aboriginal people and colonialists and associated histories of cross cultural clash and negotiation, early European expeditions in the area and the pastoral development of the region.

Tangible reminders of the exploration and establishment of the pastoral industry exist on the Park and require special management and protection. These include:

- **Gregory's Tree** is a carved boab located on the Victoria River, 15 km west of Timber Creek. The two hectare site was declared a Reserve in 1978 and listed on the NT Heritage Register in 1995. The tree marks the area of Augustus Gregory's "entrenchment camp" and still bears inscriptions noting the arrival and departure dates of his North Australian Expedition. Gregory Tree is also an Aboriginal sacred site.
- **Bullita Homestead Precinct and Stockyards** is proposed for listing on the NT Heritage Register. The site consists of the original Bullita Homestead built by pioneer Charlie Shultz in 1960 on the eastern banks of the East Baines River and stockyards built in the 1950's. The homestead precinct includes the homestead and surrounding garden, meat house, generator shed, windmill, tank stand and stockyards. The area contains many sacred features and is of great importance to Traditional Owners.
- **Drovers Rest Boab Precinct** is listed on the NT Heritage Register. Consisting of seven carved boabs, the area is associated with the early pastoral industry of the NT when cattle were overlanded along stock routes to meatworks at Wyndham and Vestey's in Darwin.
- **Jasper Gorge** is listed on the NT Heritage Register and contains a diverse range of cultural features within a scenic gorge setting, including carved boabs, rock art and stone hawk-hunting hides. The gorge has historical significance as the location of many early Aboriginal - European encounters and it is associated with early exploring activities of Gregory and his party. The gorge is highly valued by the local Aboriginal community as the location of numerous Dreaming sites.
- **Numerous carved boabs** of varying significance occur throughout the Park and have been well documented. They relate to early exploration and settlement, including times when many Aboriginal people worked on cattle stations for little or no money.

Many of the historical sites of the Park are listed on the NT Heritage Register. Still many remain, such as stone yards, carved boabs and grave sites that have not yet been assessed to determine their heritage value.



*Historical carvings on Boab trees are reminders of the area's rich pastoral history.*

### *Site Assessment and Protection*

The partners are required to consult with NT Heritage Officers and seek cultural heritage clearance for any proposed works at these sites subject to all relevant laws. Heritage approvals will complement sacred site clearances.

Sustained connection to country means that Traditional Owners have detailed historical knowledge of the region's past, including interactions between Aboriginal people and European settlers. Significance of sites to relevant Traditional Owners should be incorporated as part of the site documentation and assessment process. This knowledge could also be interesting to visitors. Some Traditional Owners are interested in "interpreting the pastoral history of the Park for tourism."

Fire and flooding are the main threat to historic sites within the Park. Damage by stock, human interference, encroaching vegetation, erosion and termite damage are examples of other threatening processes. Sites should be properly documented and conserved until their significance is appropriately assessed.

### **Aims**

- Significant sites and Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property protected.
- Traditional Owners able to fulfil their cultural obligations.
- Indigenous knowledge, skills and priorities incorporated into management programs for the Park.
- Historic sites on the Park properly documented, assessed and conserved as appropriate.

### **Management Directions**

**3.1 Culturally sensitive areas** – The Parks and Wildlife Service will manage restrictions and guidelines for sacred sites and culturally sensitive areas of the Park as directed by Traditional Owners or the Land Councils as their representatives. All park staff will be aware of significant dreaming tracks and restricted areas. Access to rock art sites in the south of the Park requires Traditional Owner supervision. Some visitor use areas occur in areas of extreme cultural sensitivity and their continued use is in some instances a matter of ongoing concern for Traditional Owners and has the potential to impact on the cultural values of the Park. Advice from Traditional Owners will be sought in managing these concerns (see **2.17**).

**3.2 Aboriginal cultural business** – The Parks and Wildlife Service will respect Traditional Owners' advice and directions relating to cultural matters and customary obligations. These include; restricting access for ceremonial purposes, respecting their need to access country, maintain traditions, and respecting that men's and women's sites' require different management considerations. Access restrictions for cultural purposes are unlikely to affect the main visitor areas. Ample notice will be given to the public regarding temporary closures (see **3.18**).

**3.3 Traditional hunting and gathering** – Rights in relation to hunting and harvest of plant materials and ochre from the Park will extend to Traditional Owners and Aboriginals



who have traditionally used the area in accordance with Aboriginal Tradition. Impacts will be reviewed annually when the Joint Management Committee meets and if warranted, hunting and harvest activity changed by mutual agreement. A hunting and gathering policy, including consideration of hunting dogs, will be developed by the Joint Management Committee and approved by all Traditional Owners. Driving off designated tracks will be actively discouraged (see 3.15).

**3.4 Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP)** – Traditional Owners will retain ownership and control of their cultural and intellectual property consistent with policy agreed between the Land Councils and the Parks and Wildlife Service.

**3.5 Sacred site clearances** – The NLC/CLC has sacred site clearance responsibility for all proposed works on the Park. However, should the joint management partners agree in consultation with the NLC/CLC, then a proponent for certain work in the Park may apply for an AAPA Authority Certificate under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*.

**3.6 Cultural heritage clearances** – Clearance will be sought under the *Heritage Conservation Act* for Declared Heritage Places, works to prescribed Aboriginal Archaeological Places and Objects in the Park as well as any significant soil disturbance, including mining. Sacred site clearances through the NLC/CLC will also be sought for works to any archaeological sites on Park.

**3.7 Managing Aboriginal and historic values** – The joint management partners will develop a Cultural Heritage Management Program and guidelines for the Park with input from NLC/CLC. The partners and the NLC/CLC will work together to identify supporting resources if required. The Program will provide for:

- “Back to Country” activities providing opportunities for the partners to spend time on country together, facilitating transmission of cultural knowledge and skills between Traditional Owner families, to the younger generation and to the Rangers, as appropriate. The program will be supported by the NLC/CLC and will support the maintenance of an actively-held body of Aboriginal cultural knowledge controlled by the Traditional Owners of the Park.
- Previously recorded cultural information and stories from Traditional Owners will be assessed and submitted to an archival system controlled by the Traditional Owners as well as entered into the Park Cultural/ Historic Sites Register where appropriate. The NLC/CLC will consult with Traditional Owners concerning their wishes with regard to the cultural knowledge and other records that they hold. Parks and Wildlife will seek assistance from the NLC/CLC in order to appropriately store and archive information so that it is protected according to the wishes of those who provided it, Departmental ICIP policy and locally developed guidelines (see 3.14).
- Research, including recording oral histories and Indigenous knowledge, will be encouraged where resulting knowledge is expected to contribute to site assessment. Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property will be protected (see 3.4).

**3.8 Managing archaeological, cultural and historic sites** - Sites will be properly documented and assessed for their significance and heritage value, incorporating significance to relevant Traditional Owners where appropriate. The Burra Charter principles and process will guide this assessment.



- Sites of significance will be submitted for nomination to the NT Heritage Register under the *Heritage Conservation Act* with the approval of the joint management partners.
- Archaeological sites may be made accessible and interpreted for the public, subject to permission of relevant Traditional Owners and provided the sites are adequately protected.
- Sites will be maintained until they can be properly assessed for their significance and heritage value. Historic sites will be managed to ensure that threats such as erosion and graffiti do not negatively impact on their values. Visitors may not remove historic artefacts.
- Sites containing rock art and wooden artefacts will be protected as part of the Fire Management Program under the direction and supervision of the relevant Traditional Owners (see **3.11**).
- Traditional Owners may initiate activities to protect sacred sites which may also be incorporated into management programs. Training will be provided for Traditional Owners in cultural site management including rock art preservation techniques.
- **Conservation Management Plans** for NT Heritage Register sites listed will be developed by the partners with the assistance of the Heritage Officer and revised as necessary (see **2.17** and **3.1**). Guidelines for carved boab management will be developed.

### 3.1.2 NATURAL AND ECOLOGICAL VALUES

#### **Background**

Judbarra is the largest park in the Northern Territory's park estate. The Park has natural and ecological values of international significance and contributes greatly to the comprehensiveness, adequacy and representativeness of the Northern Territory reserve system. This section of the Plan details the care and protection of the land, waterways, plants and animals of the Park. To effectively protect the land and its biodiversity, management must work to minimise the impacts of weeds and feral animals and manage fire and visitors appropriately.

Management decisions are supported by knowledge. A long-term vegetation monitoring program was established in 1998 to understand the effects of fire on different habitats. An expanded, formalised program of biodiversity survey, research and monitoring is required that also incorporates and records Indigenous ecological knowledge, priorities and land management practices. This should result in a better understanding of ecosystem dynamics and ability to manage key threats and their impacts.

#### ***A vast protected landscape***

The large size of Judbarra offers it some resilience to threats and therefore enhances its potential for biodiversity conservation. The Park's size offers a large range of climatic conditions and refugia for species and fewer "edge impacts" from unreserved adjoining land. Judbarra provides a key link in the Territory Eco-link strategy aimed at connecting public and voluntary private conservation efforts across the Territory.

The upper catchments of the Wickham, Humbert and East Baines Rivers and the Snake and Depot Creeks lie within the Park, in addition to the mid and lower catchment of the Victoria River. Results of the Australian Rivers Assessment Scheme indicate good environmental health of these surface waters and the spring fed upper Wickham River is noted for its high conservation value. The continued health of the Victoria River catchment is important to the lower reaches of the Victoria River, which supports significant waterfowl breeding colonies and feeding/ roosting sites for migratory shorebirds.



The Park is known for its healthy waterways.

### ***A high concentration of significant species***

Over 1 000 native plant species and 334 native vertebrate species have been recorded for the Park as well as 52 families of aquatic invertebrates and 58 species of cave invertebrates. Several of these species are significant due to their conservation status, endemism or distributional range.

Sections of the Park fall within the internationally significant “Victoria River middle reaches and Gregory Area” Site of Conservation Significance (see **Figure 1** page 7). These are sites identified within the Northern Territory with special biodiversity values that need particular attention.

In this section of the Plan, threatened species are attributed with a category based on listings under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. Assessment criteria for these categories follow those accepted by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. See **Appendix 4** for national listings under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*.

There are three Vulnerable plant species listed for the Park; Venus-hair Fern, a *Gleichenia* Fern, and *Triodia fitzgeraldii*. Until further research fully establishes the status and distribution of these populations as well as any potential threats, precautionary principles will be applied in the management of their habitat.

The Endangered Gouldian Finch and the Vulnerable Purple-crowned Fairy-wren both occur on the Park and warrant special management consideration. The most important factor in the decline of these species appears to be understorey vegetation change due to feral grazing animals and extensive late dry season fires. These birds benefit by protection of riparian vegetation from grazing animals, protection of primary habitats especially canegrass areas from frequent fires and for the Gouldian Finch in particular, special focus on fire regimes that protect the wet season feeding grounds.

*Purple-crowned Fairy-wrens rely on healthy river country.*



Although Emus and Australian Bustards are widespread in their distribution, they are in decline in the Northern Territory. The major threat to these species on Park is frequent extensive fire leading to a reduction in food supplies and decreased nesting success. Elsewhere in the NT, hunting has been suggested as a potential threatening process for Bustards and although only Traditional Owners have hunting rights on the Park the partners will need to develop local guidelines for sustainable hunting of this species.

The Partridge Pigeon is known from Judbarra. As they forage, nest and roost on the ground, they are highly susceptible to predation by feral cats as well as changes in grass cover and composition associated with fire and any grassy weed incursions. The species is advantaged by a regime of frequent, patchy but localised fire.

The Masked Owl is also known to occur on the Park, but little is known of the threatening factors leading to its decline in population numbers. However, the protection of large trees with hollows in tall forests, and the exclusion of invasive exotic grasses on the Park would be a benefit to this species.

Although Mertens Water Monitor and Yellow-spotted Monitor are widespread and protected on many parks, including Judbarra they are listed as Vulnerable in the Northern Territory because of their propensity to eat cane toads and die from the ingested toxins. The endemic Pygmy Rock Monitor also occurs in the Park. Rangers have already observed local population declines of these monitors with the arrival of Cane Toads.

The Vulnerable Angalarri Grunter has only been recorded from Limestone Gorge on the East Baines River and from an upper tributary of the Angalarri River on Bradshaw Station. Although little is known of the ecology of this highly localised fish species, its potential threats include degradation of riparian vegetation due to altered fire regimes and impacts of feral animals. Park management actions for Limestone Gorge will need to reflect these protection measures.

The Vulnerable Freshwater Sawfish is known to inhabit the Victoria River. Although primarily a marine species, it spends significant periods of its life history in the muddy-bottomed upper reaches of Rivers. It is vulnerable to net fishing and development resulting in degradation of riverine habitat. With the absence of these two factors in Judbarra, the species is offered an important refuge.

The Critically Endangered Fitzroy Land Snail and another Vulnerable Land Snail are only known from Judbarra where they are restricted to a few low limestone hills. The snails lay dormant during the dry season where they are unprotected from hot fires and are vulnerable to trampling by feral animals. Cane Toads may also have a significant impact on these snails.

The identification and mapping of important habitat areas for threatened species on Park needs to be a priority. Overlaid with other attributes such as accessibility for management, and levels of current and potential threat, this biophysical mapping will enable the partners to determine which areas of the Park to prioritise for threatened species management. This will allow very specific areas of the Park to be managed in particular ways to diminish threatening processes for these species.

Involving senior Traditional Owners and young people in joint management will enable Indigenous ecological knowledge and priorities to be incorporated into Park management as well as ensuring intergenerational transfer of Indigenous ecological knowledge is promoted.

The recording and promotion of Indigenous ecological knowledge (IEK) is seen as a critical part of joint management for Judbarra by Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife staff. At the request of senior Traditional Owners, a joint project began in 1986 with Parks and Wildlife to record Aboriginal knowledge of flora and fauna from Judbarra. The project has resulted in three invaluable resources<sup>iv</sup> that will assist with integration of IEK and inter-generational transfer of biological knowledge.

Many animal and plant species in the Park are also spiritually significant, either as Dreamings or through being included in Dreaming stories and song cycles. Indeed, there are thousands of individual plants that are regarded as significant features of sacred sites. Fifty-seven plant species have been identified as spiritually significant within Judbarra.



*Cluster figs are important Dreaming tucker for Walujapi (Black-headed python).*

### ***Karst and cave systems of International significance.***

The rugged landscapes of the Park are the result of marine depositions 1 500 million years ago and their subsequent uplift and erosion since the late Tertiary. Today, one of the most outstanding geological features of the Park are the fascinating limestone karst features, tufas and stromatolites in the Limestone Creek area. Karst is terrain with distinctive landforms and hydrology that has developed from the high solubility and porosity of limestone.

The caves and karst resources of Judbarra are of international significance with aspects of the karst system on the Park considered rare on a world scale. The Bullita cave system

<sup>iv</sup> (1) Jaminjung, Ngaliwurru and Nungali – information on 249 plants and 226 animals recorded;

(2) Ngarinyman – information on 233 plants and 237 animals recorded (Widijburru 2009);

(3) Bilinarra, Gurindji and Malngin – information on 207 plants and 248 animals recorded.



represents the longest cave system in the southern hemisphere, with over 100 km of surveyed passages. Multiple entrances have been mapped, and a network of passages represents a greater complexity than any other system recorded in Australia.

Some mapping and invertebrate fauna survey has been carried out on the cave and karst system of Judbarra.

There is no public access to the caves for safety, cultural and environmental reasons, however visitors can walk through some of the karst system and see tufas and stromatolites guided by interpretive signage in the Limestone Gorge area.

*Interesting limestone formations are abundant in the Limestone Creek area.*



The caves have long been known to Aboriginal people in the area, and numerous Aboriginal art sites occur in caves or in close proximity to cave entrances. Caves of Judbarra are important cultural sites that must be properly protected to ensure their physical and spiritual integrity.

The caves system is not actively managed other than some monitoring for activities which might threaten the cave values. A better understanding of these systems will be attained by encouraging further research of expert speleologists under permit endorsed by the Joint Management Committee.

### ***Fire sensitive ecosystems***

Fire has long been a part of the environment and has played a major role in shaping the vegetation communities of Judbarra. Aboriginal burning practices prior to European settlement in the area was likely based on frequent small burns throughout the year. Altered fire regimes since those times have resulted in higher fuel loads and more extensive hot late dry season fires and hence vegetation change that negatively impacts ecosystems and species. Traditional Owners have retained knowledge relating to traditional burning practices and see it as an essential part of maintaining the country's spiritual integrity, "cleaning up" areas and making it more accessible. Fire management activities present a valuable opportunity for Traditional Owners to visit country.

The Park contains a number of fire sensitive vegetation communities including: monsoon rainforest and karst vegetation, riparian communities, sandstone heathlands, and Lancewood thickets.

Monsoon rainforest patches and karst vegetation often share a similar and species rich flora that is different from the dominant surrounding woodlands. These highly fragmented vegetation types support many fruiting species utilised by flying foxes and birds. The movement of these seed dispersing animals between rainforest patches and also riparian vegetation facilitates the spread of rainforest plants. These vegetation types are most at risk of invasion from woodland species with increased fire frequency, which in turn encourages more frequent fires.



*Monsoon rainforests exist as isolated pockets in Judbarra.*

Riparian vegetation generally supports a high species richness of both plants and animals. As they retain moisture for longer periods than surrounding vegetation they provide important food and refuge areas. Protection of riparian vegetation from fire is also critical for general river health.

Sandstone heathland communities are of high conservation value as they are limited in extent and are particularly vulnerable to changed fire regimes. When fires are frequent changes occur in their species composition favouring more short-lived and fire tolerant species. For the plants that typify these heathlands to reach reproductive maturity, fire-free intervals of at least five years are required.

The Lancewood patches on the Park represent the western most distribution of the species range. It is a long lived species which only reproduces by seed and takes a long time to grow to seed producing age. Recent studies have indicated fire regimes in the Park are causing significant negative impacts on patches of Lancewood. This vegetation needs less frequent fire, achieved by burning the more fire tolerant habitats in the landscape, hence proving protection to these patches.

Vegetation change caused by reduced fine scale burning coupled with hot late dry season fires is known to be a threatening process for various threatened species as previously discussed.

As a means of better understanding the effects of fire on different habitats, a vegetation monitoring system was established in 1998. Detailed species presence and community structure data are collected from these sites and overlaid with fire history to help the partners understand the response of different vegetation types to a range of fire regimes. Control burns and wildfires are recorded on the Park's Geographical Information System (GIS). Good information enables the partners to work together more effectively to plan burns and respond to changes in vegetation over time.



*Early wet season burns are favoured to reduce environmental impacts.*



The fire management strategy for Judbarra emphasises habitat diversity as a principle objective. This includes maintaining a range of fuel ages across the landscape of the Park in order to “break up country” in the event of unplanned fire. The conservation goal of substantially increasing the extent of relatively long unburnt habitat will be further emphasised. Development of the fire strategy is needed to identify and record the geographic locations of fire sensitive communities and target them with the most appropriate fire regimes based on the advice of experts. The program also provides for the protection of human life and property, cultural sites (eg. rock art, and old stock yards), fire research and monitoring, and wildfire suppression.

Sustainable fire regimes, particularly in the south of the Park where many of the sensitive vegetation communities occur, will be achieved through a strong Indigenous involvement. Traditional Owners want to be involved in fire management planning and to “do burning the right way to get bush tucker.” Burning is both a land management tool for Traditional Owners and an important part of their spiritual relationships and obligations to country. There is a need to incorporate Indigenous burning practices and priorities into the fire strategy.

Liaison with Park neighbours and establishment of long-term fire breaks remains a critical part of effective fire management. Collaboration and education is essential for protecting the Park from large wildfires originating from outside the Park.

The Northern Territory Government is committed through its Greenhouse Policy to abating greenhouse gas emissions. The most realistic method of achieving this is through improved fire management on the Government estate, including Parks. Specifically minimising emissions by concentrating fire activity to the early part of the fire season.

### ***Feral animal management***

Nine introduced fauna species are recorded for Judbarra. Of these, donkeys, horses and cattle cause the most extensive environmental damage throughout the Park. Although water buffalo, camel and pig do occur in the Park, they are not widespread.

Damage caused by large feral animals includes; overgrazing, vegetation loss, trampling and foraging causing soil disturbance, accelerated erosion, invasion and spread of weed species, destruction of habitats by rooting and wallowing, siltation and widening of sensitive watercourses, as well as reducing the aesthetic value of the landscape. Understorey vegetation change caused by these large grazing animals has been directly

implicated as threatening to the Gouldian Finch, Purple-crowned Fairy-wren and Australian Bustard.

Judbarra falls within the Victoria River District Pest Declaration Area, which requires landholders to control donkeys at a management target of less than 0.1 donkeys per km<sup>2</sup>. An aerial survey of donkeys and horses in 2006 indicated a substantial increase in the numbers of grazing feral animals on the Park since previous surveys. An aerial survey and landscape scale control is well overdue.

Effective long-term control of horses, donkeys, cattle, buffalo and pigs requires a strategic approach and ongoing commitment of resources. Control methods have included strategic fencing, mustering and removal by pet meat operators under concession agreements, aerial shooting, ground shooting and trapping.

Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service have different perspectives regarding the removal of cattle and feral animals from the Park. Traditional Owners are reluctant to endorse broad scale culling of large herbivores due to their affinity with animals through pastoral work and their desire to gain economic benefit from the Park. The partners need to work together to achieve a balance between economic opportunities for Traditional Owners and effective and acceptable feral animal control methods, particularly in relation to cattle and horses.



*Control methods for large feral animals need to be negotiated between the partners.*

Feral cats have well established populations on the Park, especially in the sandstone escarpment areas. There is no formal control program for cats on Park, nor any availability of broadscale control options.

Black Rats have been recorded in canegrass areas along the Victoria River and may be impacting on the nesting success of Purple-crowned Fairy-wrens. Should further research indicate this predation is significant, a remedial program should be established.

Cane Toads probably reached the Park in 2006 as they progressed from the east. The Rangers and Traditional Owners have noticed a decline in goanna populations since that time. No practical broad scale control method is presently known for Cane Toads.

## **Weed Management**

Fifty two introduced plant species have been recorded for the Park. The majority of these species are either isolated records or species not considered environmentally threatening. Most of the important weeds requiring management attention are confined to riparian habitats, are spread by wet season floodwaters or are associated with water-holding black soil areas (see **Appendix 5**).

Weed control works on Park take into consideration weed risk (invasiveness, impacts on park values and potential distribution) as well as feasibility of control (control costs, current distribution and persistence). There is also a legal obligation to control all weeds declared under the *Weeds Management Act*. These criteria are used within a weed management prioritization matrix to direct operational programs.

Devil's Claw is the Park's highest priority weed to control. Management activity has been focused along a 50 kilometre section of the East Baines River, a two kilometre section of the Humbert River and the lower section of Gibbie Creek sub-catchment. The involvement of volunteers and community members in the annual Devil's Claw festival has been the core control effort for the past 10 years. Devil's Claw also occurs in several major tributaries of the Victoria River.

Volunteers work together with community and rangers on the annual Devil's Claw "festival."



*Parkinsonia* is listed as a Weed of National Significance (WONS), which means the partners have a legal duty to control this species. Other WoNS weeds, including Mesquite and Prickly Acacia occur in the area around the Park and it will be important to monitor likely habitat areas for incursions of these species. There is also a need to remain vigilant for the entry of Rubber Vine (WoNS) entering the Park from infestations in nearby Western Australia.

The control of local infestations of Mission Grass, Noogoora Burr and Castor Oil Bush in riparian habitats will be important where significant populations of Purple-crowned fairy-wrens occur.

For the most efficient use of resources, weed control activities described in annual Operational Plans are based on a longer term weed management strategy. The focus is on controlling established weed populations in areas of high biodiversity within the Park boundaries, whilst minimising the opportunities for the establishment of new weed species. The effectiveness of this program relies in part, on weed control activities by neighbouring



landholders, making it necessary to liaise closely with landholders and other stakeholders in the upper catchment of the Victoria River.

### **Aims**

- The Park's natural landforms and scenery protected and valued by the whole community.
- Improved knowledge, confidence and competence in managing the landscape and threatening processes.
- Indigenous knowledge and priorities incorporated into management programs.
- Threatened species and ecosystem function maintained across the broader landscape.

### **Management Directions**

**3.8 Scenery** – Protection of the Park's natural character and aesthetic values will be afforded the highest priority. Any development will be carefully sited and designed in accordance with the natural environment and significant sites, so as not to detract from the Park's outstanding landscape and scenic values (see **3.20**).

**3.9 Biodiversity Conservation** - Protection of the Park's biodiversity will be the highest management priority.

- The mapping of important habitat areas for threatened species, areas of high species richness and fire sensitive vegetation types on Park will be undertaken to determine which areas of the Park to prioritise for specific management actions. This will enable the integration and implementation of the Park's Operational Plans for fire, weeds and feral animals.
- Transfer and recording of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) particularly for threatened species will be a focus of partners spending time together on country. Traditional Owners will retain ownership and control of their IEK (see **3.4**).
- Survey and recording of the Park's biological resources will be a priority. As far as possible, at least one survey will be conducted each year with the collaboration of the biodiversity scientists, parks staff and Traditional Owners. Priority areas are those under-represented on the fauna atlas database.
- Research or monitoring programs will be developed and implemented for selected threatened species, taking into account relevant Species Recovery Plans. Priority should be given to Purple-crowned Fairy-wrens, Partridge Pigeon and Land Snails due to their conservation significance and the achievability of research outcomes relevant to Park management.
- External research projects will be encouraged. Research projects will be subject to a Research Permit in accordance with *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* (see **2.10**).

- Recreational fishing will continue to be subject to the *Fisheries Act* and Regulations and the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, Departmental policy and local guidelines (see **3.19**).

**3.10 Karst and Cave Systems** – Protection of the nationally significant karst and cave systems will remain a priority.

- Assistance from specialists may be sought in improving the understanding of karst and cave systems. Particular focus will be given to spatial information about cave openings and passages, and improving data on associated flora and fauna.
- Traditional Owners will retain control of their IEK in regard to karst and cave systems (see **3.4**) and any research will be subject to appropriate permits and approval processes (see **2.9**).
- Information about these systems may be linked to the Park Cultural/Historical Sites Register (see **3.7**)
- Due to the complexity of the cave system on the Park as well as their environmental and cultural sensitivity there will be no general public access to the caves on the Park. Access to karst areas and caves for special purposes will be by permit only.
- The Emergency Response Plan actions regarding caves will be reviewed and updated as required.

**3.11 Fire management** – The management of fire will be a high priority for protecting life, cultural sites, infrastructure and biodiversity from the effect of wildfires. Biophysical data such as available vegetation mapping and mapping of habitats important to threatened species will be used to define fire sensitive areas of the Park.

- Strategic firebreaks will be created through prescribed burning and long-term physical fire breaks will be maintained. Bushfires NT and neighbours will be notified prior to burning.
- Fuel loads will be maintained at low levels around park infrastructure and historical/cultural sites to ensure the protection of people, personal property, park assets and heritage values (see **3.8**).
- Information about threatened species and fire sensitive ecosystems will inform implementation of appropriate fire regimes. Environmental burns to maintain biodiversity will be planned annually using biophysical data, and this data will be used to further develop the long term fire management strategy.
- A Biodiversity Monitoring Program based on established fire plots will continue to be re-surveyed every five years to assess whether the fire management program is effectively maintaining biodiversity values.
- Wildfires will be reported to Bushfires NT and action taken to control their spread whenever possible. Assistance will be given to neighbouring landholders to control wildfires that may threaten the Park and to reduce fuel loads, on request. Graders and other heavy machinery will be used for wildfire suppression purposes only in extremely threatening circumstances, utilising existing tracks where possible.

- Traditional Owners' priorities and knowledge about fire, landscape and site protection will be incorporated into the fire management strategy. They will be involved in implementation of fire management programs, including traditional burning as agreed as part of the fire strategy.

**3.12 Weed management** – Management of weeds will seek to reduce the impact of particularly environmentally threatening weeds such as Devils Claw and *Parkinsonia* and guard against major visual impact on the visitor experience. The Park's GIS will continue as the basis for annual mapping, monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of weed control efforts and determining priority control areas around sensitive habitats. Current weed distribution data, vegetation mapping, and sites of biological and cultural significance will be incorporated into strategy to effectively prioritise where weeds are controlled on the Park. The management program will focus on a catchment approach to weed control.

- Weed control will be prioritised in high biodiversity areas most susceptible to invasion and impact of environmental weeds. Sites of cultural significance at risk of high fuel loads will also be managed under the direction of Traditional Owners.
- Regular survey and monitoring for the presence of threatening weeds will be undertaken across the Park with particular emphasis on areas highly susceptible to invasion.
- New weed species outbreaks will be targeted for eradication as soon as possible following detection.
- Machinery involved in road and verge maintenance will need to be cleaned prior to commencing work on the Park. This should be addressed through contractual arrangements and documentation.
- The Weed Strategy will reflect the Katherine Regional Weed Management Strategy and the requirements of the *NT Weeds Management Act*. NT Weed Risk Management Technical Working Group updates to weed "risk scores" and liaison with the Victoria River District Conservation Association will be incorporated.

**3.13 Feral animal management** – The partners will seek to reduce the impact of introduced animals on native plants, animals and the environment by exclusion and removal of large grazing animals. Traditional Owner involvement in operational planning will ensure that the views of both partners are represented. The Park's GIS will be used to map feral animal occurrences and record control actions.

- Camels, cattle, donkeys and horses will be removed from the Park according to Departmental policy and local guidelines developed by the partners. The Victoria River District Pest Declaration will also guide feral animal management. Priority will be given to sensitive areas suffering negative impacts.
- Economic opportunities for Traditional Owners for the control of feral animals will be explored by the joint management partners. This may include mustering contracts and pet meat in the short-term (see 2.5).
- Boundary fences will be regularly patrolled and maintained to prevent the entry of camels, cattle, donkeys and horses. Any new fencing will be strategically sited to



minimise the impacts of feral animals on the Park. When funds allow, Parks staff will conduct aerial surveys of inaccessible areas of the Park.

- Targeted control of Black Rats may be employed along riparian habitats suitable for Purple-crowned fairy-wren if research warrants. Cats and Cane Toads will not be a high control priority unless effective broadscale control options become available.
- Parks staff will liaise with neighbours to ensure stock are excluded from the Park.
- Rangers will enforce the Parks and Wildlife Service Pets in Parks Policy and relevant Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-Laws.

**3.14 Water Quality** – Maintaining water quality in the Park's waterholes and other surface waters will remain a priority.

- Potable water quality will be periodically monitored at major visitor nodes for visitor safety as required.
- Only non-residual, biodegradable herbicides will be used along creeklines.
- Any new developments will protect natural hydrologic processes, water quality and aquatic diversity.
- Any new toilet and sewage facilities will consider the protection of park surface and groundwater from contamination.
- Feral animals will be managed to protect waterways in accordance with the feral animal control program.

**3.15 Soil conservation** – Biophysical mapping data used in conjunction with the Park's GIS will assist future Park development and management planning. Expert advice from soil conservationists will also be sought in consideration of any management activities that have the potential to cause erosion.

- Infrastructure design and installation will minimise soil disturbance and erosion potential.
- Walking tracks, vehicle tracks, fence-lines and other erosion prone areas will be assessed after each wet season. Further erosion control work, track realignment and closures will be pursued where necessary. Soil and gravel extraction for park maintenance will be subject to relevant clearances (see **2.11**).
- Driving off designated tracks will be actively discouraged.
- Riverbanks will be monitored at access points to determine the impacts of boating, fishing and other visitor use. Access may be managed to enable soil stability to be restored where visitor activity is a cause of erosion (see **3.18**).
- Degraded areas will be rehabilitated on a priority basis. Healthy vegetation surrounding erosion areas will be used to seed rehabilitation areas.

**3.16 Stakeholder liaison** – The partners will liaise with local community and relevant stakeholders to ensure a co-ordinated approach to weed, fire and feral animal control across tenures and neighbouring properties (see **2.12**). "Control areas" may be pursued in which assistance be given to neighbours to control ferals and weeds near to the Park boundary. Integrated, regional community partnerships in natural resource management

planning will be encouraged, with particular emphasis on adjoining landowners and community ranger groups.

## 3.2 MANAGING FOR VISITORS

### Introduction

This section addresses visitor management and identifies ways of accommodating visitor interests while protecting the natural, Aboriginal and historic values of the Park.

The Park offers visitors a remote, outback experience with the opportunity to explore its rich natural and cultural heritage or to simply relax, enjoy the stunning vistas and catch a fish. Approximately 21 000 visitors each year traverse the northern part of the Park, experiencing key attractions along the scenic Victoria Highway. The vast interior of the Park largely remains a wilderness area, attracting about 4 670 visitors each year. The opportunity to experience the Park's many attractions with little contact with other people is a key part of the Park's appeal for many.

Traditional Owners enthusiastically welcome visitors to the Park. They want to share their country and culture. They also want visitors to respect the area's values, both cultural and natural, and to learn about and enjoy the Park safely. They say "we hope tourists come to our country and spend time learning about our country and behaving the right way." The joint management partners believe good visitor information is a key to those outcomes. They want visitors to have well maintained facilities suitable for the Park's character. There is potential to expand the experiences offered to the public, in particular authentic Indigenous experiences.

The joint management partners encourage visitors to have a safe and interactive experience at Judbarra. They would like the following key messages to be communicated to visitors:

- We welcome you to this special place. Help us to look after its important cultural, natural and historical values by showing respect.
- Visitors have the chance to learn about different Aboriginal cultures and country during their stay.
- Follow the guidelines we have put in place to look after the Park and make sure you stay safe.
- Traditional Owners and Rangers are looking after the Park together, two ways.

### Principles for Managing Visitors

- Appropriate tourism development can benefit the local community creating demand for, and generating income from visitor services.
- Well designed facilities protect Park values and promote safe, enjoyable visitor experiences.
- Visitor safety is paramount.
- Visitors' appreciation and respect for the Park is enhanced by sharing information about the Park's unique natural and cultural values.
- Well managed commercial operations helps visitor management by providing opportunities, services and facilities that the Parks and Wildlife Service cannot provide.

- Monitoring visitor activities and satisfaction helps decision-making and can identify enterprise opportunities for Traditional Owners.

### 3.2.1 RECREATIONAL AND TOURISM VALUES

#### Background

While continued growth in tourism is generally forecast for the Northern Territory during the term of this Plan, a dramatic increase in visitors to the Park is not expected. Promotion of the Park's four-wheel drive tracks is expected to increase some use of the track network. It is important for the joint management partners to liaise closely with Tourism NT and Tourism Top End to ensure marketing and promotion is consistent with the character of the Park.

Judbarra's significant recreational and tourism values are based around:

- Opportunities for visitors to rest and appreciate the spectacular scenery along the Victoria Highway;
- Access to fishing and boating opportunities on the Park's picturesque and unspoilt creeks and rivers;
- The vast, wild and remote landscapes enjoyed via the Park's four-wheel drive tracks;
- Interpreting the diverse cultural values of the Park to visitors;
- Interpreting the Park's natural landscape features and species of interest; and
- Interpreting important historic sites such as Gregory's Tree.

The partners are committed to providing accurate up-to-date information, well designed and maintained facilities and a range of safe and appropriate activities for visitors to enjoy. The appropriate development, use and level of access is determined by the Park Zoning Scheme (see 2.14) and relevant parks tourism development plans.

#### ***Top End Touring***

The majority of visitors to the Park are in transit, travelling the sealed Victoria Highway between Katherine and the Western Australia border - a part of the "Savannah Way". This type of visitor typically uses the facilities of Timber Creek as well as park facilities located along the Victoria River Highway, camping overnight or having picnics. For many visitors of this type their use of park facilities is unplanned and motivated by roadside signs and scenic opportunities as they travel through the Park.



*Stunning vistas of the Victoria River District are a major tourism drawcard.*

Facilities provided and maintained for these travellers are focussed at the main visitor nodes (see **Appendix 1**), including:

- **Orientation shelters** located beside the Victoria Highway. The shelter at the western boundary of the Gregory sector contains comprehensive welcome and orientation information. The shelter at the eastern boundary of the Victoria River sector requires information panels and upgraded access.
- **Big Horse Creek**, located ten kilometres west of the Timber Creek township beside the Victoria River, is the most visited site on the Park. It includes approximately 20 designated camping sites including sites for coach groups, a picnic area and boat ramp. Facilities include composting toilets, wood fires and picnic tables. Water for visitor use is transported to the site. The main group using the facilities is visitors in pursuit of fishing opportunities, attracted by the convenient access to the Victoria River. A tour operator currently runs boat tours from this site under an approved concession and Operational Agreement. The Parks and Wildlife Service manages all campgrounds with fees collected via a visitor honesty system.
- **Sullivan Creek Campground** is located about 15 kilometres within the eastern park boundary beside the Victoria Highway. The area caters for about six groups and has basic amenities including picnic tables, wood barbecues and a pit toilet. Water is not supplied. A nearby waterhole offers a short walk and fishing. The main use of this campground is as a roadside stop, picnic area or overnight camp for highway travellers.
- **Gregory's Tree Historical Reserve** is two hectares of land situated off the Victoria Highway, close to Timber Creek. Gregory's Tree is a Declared Heritage Place and an Aboriginal sacred site where visitors can enjoy views of the Victoria River and read and learn about early explorers and Aboriginal people. A boardwalk surrounds and protects the boab tree.
- **Joe Creek Picnic Area** is located about eight kilometres west of the Victoria River Crossing, south of the Victoria Highway. Encompassed by spectacular escarpment, the site provides a scenic picnicking opportunity and basic amenities including wood barbecues and a pit toilet.

The increasing popularity of camper trailers in this visitor group will need further consideration as the existing camping facilities do not adequately meet their needs and causes congestion of campgrounds during peak visitor periods. The provision of toilet facilities at the western entry to the Park and the Victoria River boat ramp is also a management priority.

Walks which are generally enjoyed by this visitor group include:

- The **Escarpment Walk**, about two kilometres west of the Victoria River Crossing, is a moderately difficult track that takes about ninety minutes to complete. This popular walk climbs to a lookout on the escarpment edge offering superb views over the rugged terrain of this part of the Park. Interpretive and safety information is provided at the start of the walk as well as along the track.
- The **Joe Creek Walk** is a moderately difficult ninety minute walk. The track runs to the base of the escarpment where Livistona palms and native ferns grow and interpretive signs inform visitors about these and other interesting plants. Aboriginal rock art along the rock cliff is a potential interpretive opportunity.

The Park's waterways are recreational resources of high significance, offering scenic **boating** and **fishing** opportunities that draw visitors from the Top End and interstate. There is boat access to the Victoria River at Big Horse Creek and the Victoria River Gorge Picnic Area. Fishing from the river bank is pursued at these and other sites including the Old Victoria River Crossing, the East Baines River at Limestone Creek and Bullita and at a number of accessible locations along the Humbert and Wickham Rivers. Motorised water craft are not permitted on the Wickham River due to its significant natural and cultural values.

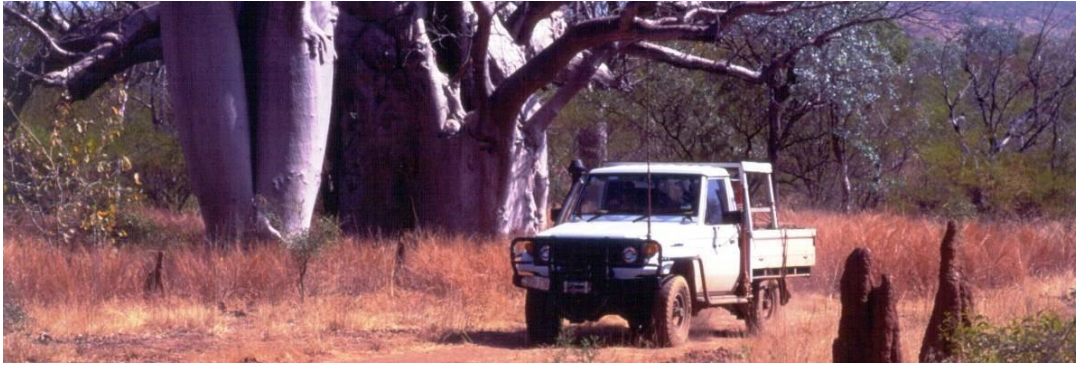
Scenic **flights** occasionally operate over the Park from Timber Creek and the Victoria River Wayside Inn. The airstrip at Bullita is not maintained and there is no provision for visitors to land within the Park without special permission.

### ***Remote four-wheel drive adventuring***

The other type of visitor to Judbarra has usually pre-planned their visit and stay longer in the Park. This group is typically interested in adventurous four-wheel driving, camping and fishing opportunities.

For this type of visitor, the Binns Track, Buchanan Highway and Buntine Highway connect to the four-wheel drive tracks in the south of the Park (**Appendix 1**). The Bullita Access Road which leaves the Victoria Highway 15 km east of Timber Creek is the most frequently used unsealed road in the Park, providing access to the popular sites of Limestone Gorge, the Bullita Homestead Precinct and Stockyards and the Park's four-wheel drive tracks. High clearance four-wheel drive vehicles are required on all tracks and the towing of trailers is not recommended.





*A network of tracks cater for 4WD enthusiasts during the dry season.*

While the Park's four-wheel drive tracks currently receive relatively little use, it is envisaged that four-wheel drive touring will become a more significant visitor activity during the term of this Plan. A relatively new Tourism NT initiative and promotion of the Binns Track from Mount Dare (in South Australia) to Timber Creek may enhance visitor usage of the Park track network. Tourism NT four-wheel drive market research will be valuable for future planning of the Park track network.

The four-wheel drive network usually opens in the dry season (May) and then closes in the wet season (generally late November) with the onset of rains. Opening and closing dates vary with the amount and timing of rainfall.

The Park's four-wheel drive track network includes about 500 kms of tracks including:

- The **Bullita Stock Route** is the most popular track with an estimated 150 vehicles per year. The route follows part of an old droving trail into the remote western section of the Park and loops back onto the Bullita Access Track. Requiring about eight hours to complete, the track passes through limestone-terraced hills and scenic sandstone ranges and includes the Drover's Rest Boab Precinct.
- The **Humbert Track** begins near Bullita and winds in a southerly direction for 62 km through sandstone mesas and over limestone ridges, exiting the Park near the Humbert River Station Homestead. Used by about 100 vehicles per year, the track takes approximately six hours to complete. This section of track is part of the much more extensive **Binns Track** which is promoted as "one of Australia's epic four-wheel drive journeys."
- The **Gibbie Creek Track** branches off about 45 km from the head of the Humbert Track. This track crosses the scenic middle reaches of the Wickham River. Within the Park the track is 92 km long. The southern portion of the track is known as the Gibbie Creek Track. The track exits the Park near the Mt Sandford Station from where it is a further 65 km to Kalkarindji on the Buntine Highway.
- The **Broadarrow Track** winds for 293 km through the Park's remote southwest connecting with the Buntine Highway. Originally developed as part of the Territory Explorer Four-wheel Drive Route to allow visitors to travel through the Territory north/south completely by four-wheel drive tracks, it also provides management access to the Park's interior. This track is the Park's most remote and challenging, requiring at least three days to complete.

- The **Tuwakam Track** links the Bullita Access Track to the Buchanan Highway near Jasper Gorge. This track makes a pleasant day trip from Timber Creek.
- The **Limestone Gorge Track** is a short track off the Bullita Access Road, which travels through an impressive landscape dominated by limestone features, tufa dams and boabs.

Low-key, small campsites are established at various points along these tracks. Typically these are within natural, attractive settings and are close to waterholes with fishing opportunities. In keeping with the self-reliant philosophy, the only amenity that is provided at these campsites are wood fireplaces with hotplates.

Walks which are generally enjoyed by this visitor group include:

- Two walking tracks in the **Limestone Gorge Area**: The Calcite Flow walk with interpretive signs that explain the area's fascinating karst terrain and limestone formations with pleasant views across the surrounding landscape. The longer Limestone Ridge walk (approximately one hour) leads to lookouts and has interpretive signs along the track.
- Two walking tracks along the **Humbert** four-wheel drive track. The Fig Tree Lookout walk and the Policeman's Waterhole walk are short (approximately thirty minutes) and are described in pre-visit literature.

Extended overnight bushwalking in remote areas is permitted in the Park subject to permits issued by the Parks and Wildlife Service. The Park's climate limits significant demand for this type of activity however and such opportunities are not actively promoted. Similar opportunities exist elsewhere within the region and are widely promoted.

Other facilities provided for the four-wheel drive adventurer include:

- River access at the Victoria River Gorge provides for boat launching from the rocky river bed (three kilometres south of the Victoria River Crossing).
- The Old Victoria River Crossing, 300 metres off the Victoria Highway within the Victoria River Sector, is essentially undeveloped and offers informal opportunities to explore the Victoria River and access a large dry season waterhole.
- Limestone Gorge has a small campground and day-use area at the junction of the East Baines River and Limestone Creek. Basic facilities include wood barbecues, tables and a pit toilet at the walk-in day-use area.
- The Bullita Homestead Precinct and Stockyards is located near Bullita in the Gregory sector. Near the Bullita Homestead Precinct and at the start of the Bullita Stock Route four-wheel drive track is the Bullita campground, which has basic facilities including wood barbecues, toilets and a public telephone.

## Managing the Park for visitors

### *Visitor Safety*

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk, it can be reduced if facilities are well maintained and visitors are prepared, have realistic expectations and behave appropriately. Having a clear and current set of emergency response procedures, appropriately trained Rangers and adequate resources will assist in providing effective management of emergency incidents.

The main safety concerns include:

- Visitors becoming lost, injured or affected by heat or dehydration whilst walking in the Park;
- Injury to visitors in remote locations;
- Road and air accidents /incidents;
- Boating and fishing accidents;
- Fire;
- Dangerous animals (including crocodiles and feral animals) and;
- Flooding and visitors becoming bogged or stranded between rivers.

Significant improvements to risk management in recent years include enhanced pre-visit information and upgraded information panels with improved safety advice, particularly in relation to the four-wheel drive tracks. Proper preparation and safety messages in regard to use of the Park's four-wheel drive tracks are strongly promoted in all Parks and Wildlife Service literature, in on-site information at Top Springs Roadhouse, Victoria River Roadhouse, Kalkarindji and Timber Creek and also in signage at both ends of every track. Other visitor safety measures include on-track markers, including distance markers. People accessing remote areas of the Park are encouraged to have radio contact or carry a satellite telephone and a personal locator beacon.

Improved walking track marking and track maintenance has generally lessened the scope for lost or injured walkers. The Park Emergency Response Plan continues to be reviewed on an annual basis. Rangers are trained in advanced first aid and respond to a range of incidents including first aid, search and rescue, medical evacuations and vehicle accidents.

Swollen rivers and wet roads generally prohibit access within the Gregory Sector for months during and following the wet season. Public information on these closures are displayed on Departmental websites. Track erosion is kept in check through an annual maintenance program effected through the support of Departmental soil conservation experts.

Further work is required with Traditional Owners to ensure that concerns regarding culturally dangerous areas such as sickness country, men's and women's areas are addressed and reflected through the Park Zoning scheme and management.

**Canoeing** and **swimming** the rivers in the Park is actively discouraged due to the potentially dangerous estuarine crocodiles that inhabit waterways. As crocodiles are not actively managed on the Park, canoeing will only be permitted as part of an approved

commercial activity. A "Be Crocwise" education program is delivered by Park rangers to the local community and schools.

Safety signs warn Park visitors of inherent risks.



Judbarra is occasionally sought out for more unusual activities or "**adventure pursuits**". Such activities may or may not conflict with other park values or the enjoyment of other visitors. They are however, activities for which Parks and Wildlife do not generally cater and which can usually be pursued outside parks. Among these activities are mountain bike riding, rock climbing and abseiling.

Special access permission is required for a range of activities including: remote walking and camping, canoeing, functions, landing aircraft, research, volunteers and commercial interests. See **2.9** and **2.10**.

#### *Information, Interpretation and Public Education*

Information and interpretation plays an important role in visitor management by informing people about the values of the Park and how visitors can respect them. Public education informs visitors about facilities, activities and relevant regulations and, explains or interprets the Park's natural and cultural features.

To date there has been no interpretation plan for the Park. Developing a plan for the way the Park is presented to the public would ensure that messages and themes are consistent as well as giving the partners the opportunity to set interpretive directions. In particular, there is scope for the cultural values of the Park to be more comprehensively interpreted to visitors by Traditional Owners. Interpreting plants, animals and landscapes of special interest should also form a part of any new interpretive strategy. Ensuring that visitors can access information through a variety of different media is also important. Signs and fact sheets will remain important and can be complemented by web based material and face-to-face interpretation.

Currently visitors can access pre-visit information through web-based materials and publications. The majority of this information is provided by Tourism NT and the Parks and Wildlife Service. It is important that the public information and images of the Park are accurate, appropriate and consistent with the values and character of the Park.

More specific park orientation and awareness is promoted through Park Fact Sheets prepared by the Parks and Wildlife Service. Over time, these fact sheets will be redeveloped with input from Traditional Owners.

As part of the Parks and Wildlife Service interpretation program, Gregory rangers present slideshows, guided walks and talks at various locations around the Park throughout the dry season. Visitor feedback indicates that this experience is highly valued and that similar experiences with local Aboriginal people are a visitor experience that should be developed.

### *Regional Tourism*

Visitor surveys are important for understanding visitor needs and expectations, and hence for the planning of future developments. Currently, visitor surveys and tourism industry feedback indicate satisfaction with low key development and ongoing improvements provided by the Parks and Wildlife Service. Visitor surveys show the majority of visitors are generally satisfied with facilities and experiences provided, but would like more contact with the Rangers and further opportunities for cultural experiences with local Aboriginal people.

As visitor interest in the Park continues to grow, it will continue to be important for the joint management partners to work closely with all tourism interests in the area and respond appropriately to visitor feedback. The Joint Management Committee will require ongoing capacity building so they can effectively engage with the tourism industry and tourism development proponents. The partners will be guided in their decision making by an overarching Territory Parks Tourism and Recreation Plan, a Private Investment in Park Tourism Infrastructure Policy and a Tourism Development Strategy for the Park.

An increasing number of visitors value authentic, personal interaction with local Aboriginal people. They want to learn about their lives, history and culture as well as observing Indigenous art and painting. These exchanges can foster appreciation of the living cultural landscape of the Park and encourage visitors to enjoy the Park with greater respect.

Traditional Owners of Judbarra maintain strong connections to country through language, culture, stories and ecological knowledge. Many regularly hunt and gather bush tucker and materials on the Park. They live on or in close proximity to the Park, providing viable opportunities for visitors to connect with the oldest living culture on earth.

A strategic, regional approach is required for Indigenous tourism product development consistent with Tourism NT's Indigenous Tourism Business development framework. Traditional Owners wanting to develop tourism businesses and concessionary operations including remote four wheel drive and bush camping experiences may require assistance of other Northern Territory Government agencies, the Northern and Central Land Council and the tourism industry. Joint ventures and working with existing enterprises may be a good way to enter the tourism industry. Some tour operators have expressed interest in a closer working relationship with Indigenous communities.

## Aims

- Provision of outstanding visitor experiences, centred on the Park's wild and remote landscapes and shared cultural heritage.
- Well presented facilities and services.

## Management Directions

**3.17 Zoning** – Visitor access, activities and facilities will be managed and developed according to the zoning scheme in this Plan (see **2.14**).

### 3.18 Access

- The partners will maintain communication with the relevant roads management and soil conservation advisory branches within Northern Territory Government to reduce erosion at major creeks and to minimise the impact of the wet season on visitor access (see **3.14** and **3.15**).
- Directional and safety signs on public access roads will be standardised throughout the Park to meet Tourism NT four-wheel drive standards.
- Correct routes and appropriate behaviour when travelling through adjoining pastoral properties will be supported through signage and pre trip information (see **2.12**).
- Permits will be required for walkers wanting to camp overnight in remote areas of the Park (see **2.9**).
- River access will be monitored and controlled to minimise erosion (see **3.15**).
- Entry of pets will be consistent with existing Parks and Wildlife Service policy.
- The Park or areas within it may be temporarily closed to the public for fire, wet season, erosion control, rehabilitation works, feral animal culls and important Aboriginal ceremonies (see **3.2**). As much public notice as possible will be given to minimise inconvenience. Effort will be made to avoid closure at times of high public visitation.

### 3.19 Activities

- Camping will continue to be allowed in designated camping areas.
- Fishing in the Park is subject to the requirements of the *Fisheries Act* and the *TPWCA*. Nets or traps will not be permitted. Rangers will enforce these requirements (see **3.9**).
- Boating is permitted in the visitor zone. Impacts will be monitored and crocodile safety information communicated to visitors. Canoeing will be permitted as part of an approved concession only. Motorised water craft will continue to be excluded from the Wickham River.
- Four-wheel drive tracks will be closed during the wet season for visitor safety and to reduce track maintenance.
- A permit will be required for adventure activities including mountain bike riding, rock climbing and abseiling. Departmental Policy and local guidelines will be developed by the partners, should interest warrant.

**3.20 Existing Facilities and Future Developments** – Park infrastructure will be monitored and maintained and, subject to needs and resources, will be upgraded. Visitor



surveys and Tourism NT four-wheel drive sector surveys will continue to inform development planning (see **2.10**). The Joint Management Committee will endorse forward works plans and site development plans in collaboration with stakeholders, guided by relevant parks tourism and recreation development plans. Decisions will be made in accordance with structures and processes outlined in Section 2. The need to protect scenic, natural, cultural, historical values and the character of the Park will underpin any future developments (see **2.5, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 3.14** and **3.15**).

- Existing orientation shelters will be outfitted with comprehensive information, including the joint management of the Park. The Eastern orientation shelter requires complete outfitting with signage as well as improved access.
- Toilet facilities will be provided at the western park entry and the Victoria River boat ramp.
- A review of the Park's walking tracks will be conducted to improve access, reduce impacts and ensure protection of cultural sites.
- Highly visited areas and sections of existing walking tracks will be hardened for improved access and to reduce erosion. A safe lookout area in the Victoria River sector, including interpretive signage will be considered.
- The Limestone Gorge Track will be realigned and shortened and the campground relocated to improve visitor access.
- Appropriate concessions to operate campgrounds, particularly at Big Horse and Sullivan Creek campsites will be pursued (see **2.5**).
- Energy efficient technology, such as hybrid power generating systems will be used where possible.
- The partners will consider ways to better accommodate increased visitation as numbers increase including:
  - The Big Horse Creek Campground and picnic area and Sullivans Campground will be reviewed for site design aspects and capacity.
  - A high quality camping facility in the Victoria River sector accessible to conventional vehicles will be developed subject to resources.

**3.21 Community education and interpretative program** – The partners will develop an Interpretation Plan for the Park. Both partners will be involved in planning, prioritising and delivering interpretation, information, community education and Junior Ranger programs.

- Visitor information will be reviewed for accuracy and appropriateness. Aboriginal people, place names and language will be represented (see **2.13**). Information will include new uses of communication technologies where possible and appropriate.
- The joint management partners will work with Tourism NT and other relevant agencies to ensure the Park is marketed and promoted accurately and appropriately, consistent with the values and character of the Park (see **2.12**).
- The partners will contribute materials to the Parks and Wildlife Tour Guide Training Program. Traditional Owners will ensure that all Aboriginal cultural information shared with visitors is accurate and appropriate.

**3.22 Visitor safety** – The Park's facilities and visitor management practices will be subject to ongoing monitoring, maintenance and risk assessment. All park facilities will be designed, constructed and maintained to minimise risk of injury.

- Identified risks will be rectified on a priority basis.
- The Emergency Response Plan will be annually reviewed and Rangers will receive appropriate training.
- Fire prevention, information about heat and humidity and other relevant safety messages will be communicated to visitors.
- Swimming will be actively discouraged through signage and good visitor information and the “crocodile” education program as estuarine crocodiles endanger the safety of visitors.
- Visitors to remote areas of the Park will be encouraged to have radio contact or carry a satellite phone and a personal locator beacon.

**3.23 Indigenous tourism** –The partners will collaborate with Tourism NT, sectors of the tourism industry, NLC/CLC and local operators to foster Aboriginal employment in tourism and assist development of local Indigenous tourism enterprise. Cross-cultural voluntourism opportunities will be developed and promoted (see 2.5).

*Indigenous experiences are highly sought by visitors.*



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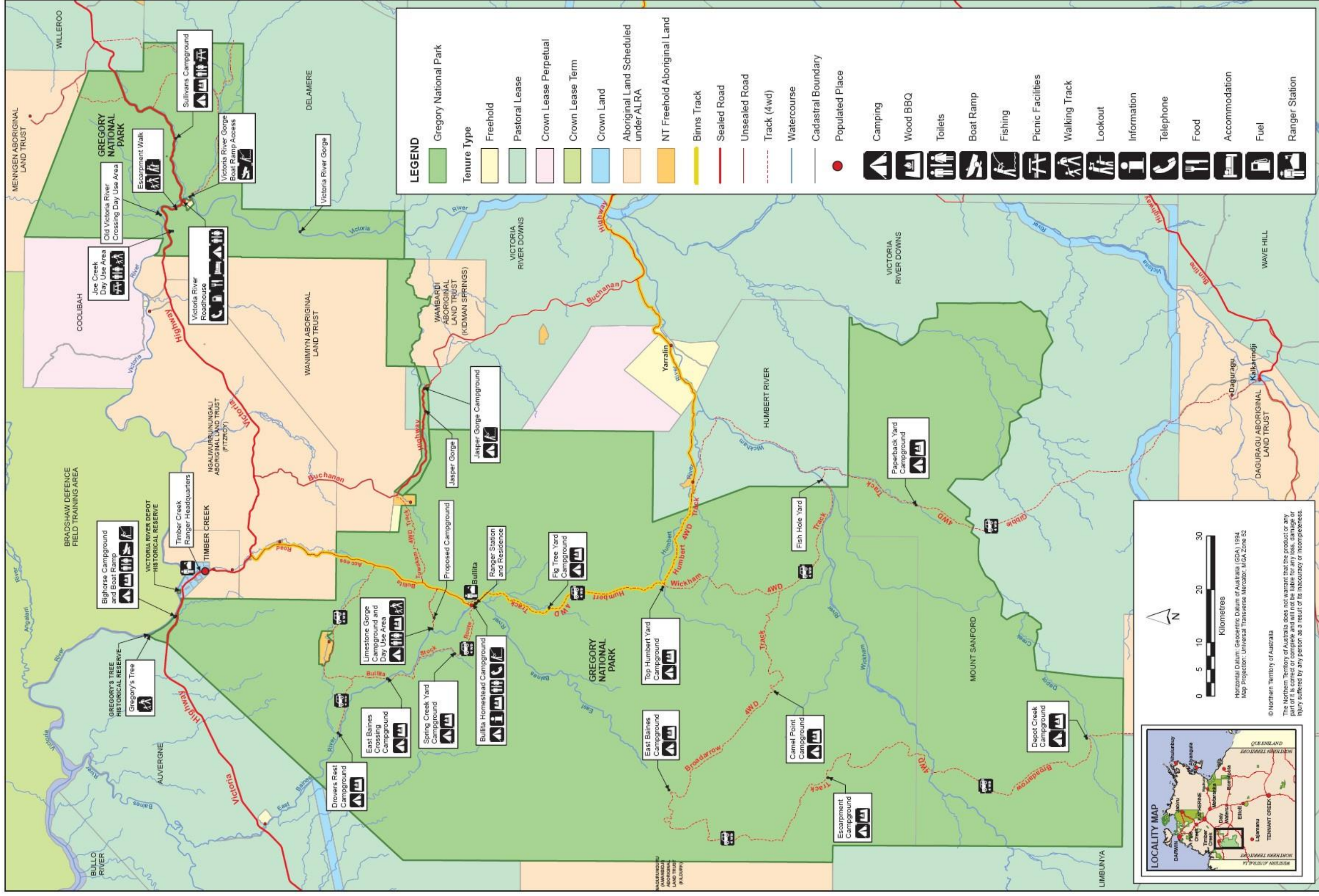
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APPENDIX 1. PARK MAP



## **APPENDIX 2. EXTRACTS FROM THE *TERRITORY PARKS AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ACT***

### **part iii – joint management of certain parks and reserves**

#### **Division 3 – Joint management partners, objective and principles**

##### **25AA. Joint management partners**

###### **(1) The joint management partners for a park or reserve are –**

- (a) the Territory or a body nominated by the Territory as the representative of the Territory; and
- (b) the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve.

###### **(2) The joint management partners are together responsible for the management of the park or reserve.**

###### **(3) The joint management partners must perform their functions under this Part in respect of a park or reserve in a manner that –**

- (a) is consistent with any lease referred to in section 8(c) or 10(1)(f) of the *Framework Act* entered into in respect of the park or reserve;
- (b) is consistent with the joint management agreement referred to in section 8(d) of the *Framework Act* entered into in respect of the park or reserve;
- (c) is consistent with any indigenous land use agreement referred to in section 8(e) of the *Framework Act* entered into in respect of the park or reserve;
- (d) achieves the objective stated in section 25AB;
- (e) is in accordance with the principles stated in section 25AC; and
- (f) is in accordance with the joint management plan for the park or reserve.

##### **25AB. Objective of joint management**

The objective of joint management of a park or reserve is to jointly establish an equitable partnership to manage and maintain the park or reserve as part of a comprehensive and representative system of parks and reserves in the Territory and for the following purposes:

- (a) benefiting both the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve and the wider community;
- (b) protecting biological diversity;
- (c) serving visitor and community needs for education and enjoyment.



### **25AC. Principles of joint management**

The objective is to be achieved by managing the park or reserve in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) recognising, valuing and incorporating Aboriginal culture, knowledge and decision making processes;
- (b) utilising the combined land management skills and expertise of both joint management partners;
- (c) recognising and addressing the need for institutional support and capacity building of the joint management partners;
- (d) recognising that community living areas in or in close proximity to parks and reserves are an integral part of the natural and cultural resource management of parks and reserves;
- (e) involving continuing statutory responsibilities and functions of the Minister with respect to parks and reserves;
- (f) managing parks and reserves may include cooperative management agreements for areas of land outside parks and reserves;
- (g) establishing a process for the consideration of applications for mining and petroleum

## **Division 6 – Role of Land Councils**

### **25AN. Application of Division**

This Division applies in relation to the parks and reserves specified in Schedules 2 and 3 to the Framework Act.

### **25AO. Functions of Land Councils in relation to parks and reserves**

(1) Pursuant to section 23(2) of ALRA, the following functions are conferred on a Land Council:

- (a) to ascertain and express the wishes and the opinion of Aboriginals living in its area as to the management of the parks and reserves in that area and as to appropriate legislation concerning those parks and reserves;
- (b) to protect the interests of the traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aboriginals interested in, those parks and reserves;
- (c) to consult with the traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aboriginals interested in, those parks and reserves about the use of those parks and reserves;
- (d) to negotiate with persons desiring to obtain an estate or interest (including a licence) in any of those parks or reserves on behalf of the traditional Aboriginal owners of that park or reserve and any other Aboriginals interested in that park or reserve;

- (e) to supervise, and provide administrative and other assistance to, the Park Land Trusts holding, or established to hold, park freehold title in parks and reserves in its area.

(2) In carrying out its functions under subsection (1) in relation to a park or reserve in its area, a Land Council must have regard to the interests of, and must consult with, the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve and any other Aboriginals interested in the park or reserve and, in particular, must not take any action (including, but not limited to, the giving or withholding of consent in any matter in connection with the park freehold title held by a Park Land Trust) unless the Land Council is satisfied that –

- (a) the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve understand the nature and purpose of the proposed action and, as a group, consent to it; and
- (b) any Aboriginal community or group that may be affected by the proposed action has been consulted and has had adequate opportunity to express its view to the Land Council.

**(3) In this section –**

- “area”, in relation to a Land Council, has the same meaning as in ALRA;
- “park freehold title” has the same meaning as in the Framework Act;
- “Park Land Trust” has the same meaning as in the Framework Act.

### APPENDIX 3. GUIDELINES FOR DECISION MAKING

<b>Level 1: Activities part of normal day to day management, as agreed in this Plan</b>	<b>Level 2: Activities that cover the whole park, but do not have a big impact on people's lives</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not need Traditional Owner consultation.</li> <li>• Decisions made through normal park management processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks and Wildlife staff must ask Traditional Owner representatives.</li> <li>• Representatives must ask Traditional Owners and seek a decision.</li> <li>• The representatives will carry the decision back to Parks and Wildlife.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3: Activities that have a big impact on one area, but not on other areas</b>	<b>Level 4: Activities that have a big impact on the whole Park</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks must first ask the Traditional Owner representative group.</li> <li>• Parks will work with the Traditional Owner representatives and the relevant Land Council to provide information and issues to all affected Traditional Owners.</li> <li>• Traditional Owner representatives will also give information to Traditional Owners not affected by the proposal.</li> <li>• The Land Council must make sure people have good information before making a decision.</li> <li>• The information may be presented to family groups or in local area meetings.</li> <li>• All Traditional Owners of the affected area will make the decision, and will give this decision to their representatives, to be taken back to Parks and Wildlife staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks and Wildlife staff must first ask the Traditional Owner representative group.</li> <li>• Parks and Wildlife will then work with the Traditional Owner representatives and Land Councils to give information about the issues to all Traditional Owners.</li> <li>• The Land Councils must make sure people have good information before making a decision.</li> <li>• The information may be presented to family groups, or in local area meetings.</li> <li>• All Traditional Owners will make the decision, and will give this decision to their representatives, to be taken back to Parks and Wildlife staff.</li> </ul>
<p>Note: For all activities on the Park, Traditional Owner representatives do not make decisions, but instead carry information and decisions between the Parks and Wildlife Service and Traditional Owners.</p>	

## APPENDIX 4. PARK THREATENED SPECIES LIST

	Species	Common name	NT status	National status
<b>Plants</b>	<i>Adiantum capillus-veneris</i>	Venus-hair Fern	Vulnerable	Not Listed
	<i>Gleichenia sp.</i> Victoria River	Fern	Vulnerable	Not Listed
	<i>Triodia fitzgeraldii</i>	Spinifex	Vulnerable	Not Listed
<b>Invertebrates</b>	<i>Mesodontrachia fitzroyana</i>	Fitzroy Land Snail	Critically Endangered	Endangered
	<i>Prototrachia sedula</i>	Land Snail	Vulnerable	Not Listed
<b>Fish</b>	<i>Pristis microdon</i>	Freshwater Sawfish	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
	<i>Scortum neili</i>	Angalarri Grunter	Vulnerable	Not Listed
<b>Reptiles</b>	<i>Varanus mertensi</i>	Mertens Water Monitor	Vulnerable	Not Listed
	<i>Varanus panoptes</i>	Yellow-spotted Monitor	Vulnerable	Not Listed
<b>Birds</b>	<i>Dromaius novaehollandiae</i>	Emu	Vulnerable	Not Listed
	<i>Ardeotis australia</i>	Australian Bustard	Vulnerable	Not Listed
	<i>Geophaps smithii smithii</i>	Partridge Pigeon	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
	<i>Tyto novaehollandiae kimberli</i>	Masked Owl	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
	<i>Malurus coronatus coronatus</i>	Purple-crowned Fairy-wren	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
	<i>Erythrura gouldiae</i>	Gouldian Finch	Endangered	Endangered

## APPENDIX 5. IMPORTANT WEEDS FOR PARK MANAGEMENT

(including weeds that occur near but not on park)

<b>Common name</b>	<b>Species name</b>	<b>Current weed declaration status*</b>
Gamba Grass	<i>Andropogon gayanus</i>	A and C
Neem Tree	<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	-
Barleria	<i>Barleria prionitis</i>	A and C
Calopo	<i>Calopogonium mucunoides</i>	
Rubber Bush	<i>Calotropis procera</i>	B and C
Buffel Grass	<i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i>	-
Rubber vine	<i>Cryptostegia spp.</i>	A and C
Hyptis	<i>Hyptis suaveolens</i>	B and C
Bellyache Bush	<i>Jatropha gossypifolia</i>	A and C
Lions Tail	<i>Leonotis nepetifolia</i>	A and C
Devils Claw	<i>Martynia annua</i>	A and C
Parkinsonia	<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>	B and C (WONS)
Purple Top Mission Grass	<i>Pennisetum pedicellatum</i>	-
Mission Grass	<i>Pennisetum polystachion</i>	B and C
Mesquite	<i>Prosopis spp.</i>	A and C (WONS)
Castor Oil Bush	<i>Ricinus communis</i>	B and C
Sickelpod	<i>Senna obtusifolia</i>	B and C
Spiny Head Sida	<i>Sida acuta</i>	B and C
Giant Rats Tail Grass	<i>Sporobolus spp.</i>	-
Grader Grass	<i>Themeda quadrivalvis</i>	B and C
Para Grass	<i>Urochloa mutica</i>	-
Noogoora Burr	<i>Xanthium occidentale</i>	B and C
Chinee Apple	<i>Ziziphus mauritiana</i>	A and C

**NT Weed Declaration categories** (class A - to be eradicated, class B - growth and spread to be controlled, class C - not to be introduced to the NT).

**WONS** (Weeds of National Significance)

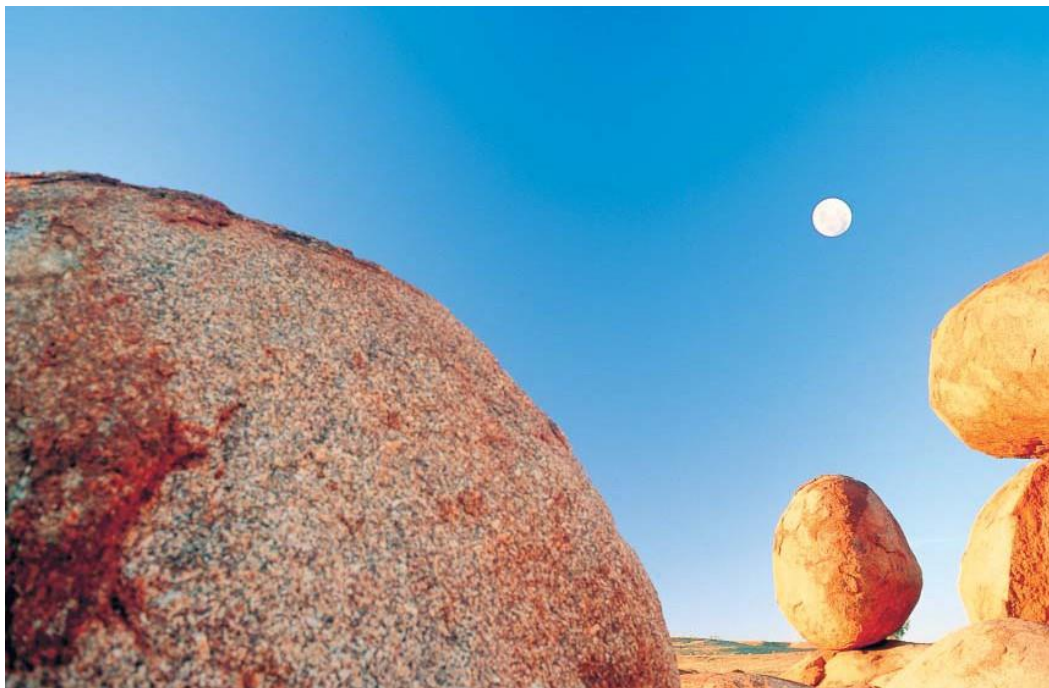
No weed declaration status in the NT (-)

\*The Northern Territory weed declaration list is currently being reviewed, and several weed species on or near the Park have been proposed for declaration by the Weed Risk Management Technical Working Group. Buffel Grass, Giant Rat's Tail Grass, Annual Mission Grass, Neem Tree, and Para Grass have been deemed a high or very high weed risk and require a strong management response. All declared weeds from the Park require management consideration and should be included in Operational Plans for the Park.



# Devil's Marbles (Karlu Karlu) Conservation Reserve

**Joint Management Plan**  
February 2009





Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve  
Joint Management Plan

Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory,  
Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport  
PO Box 1120,  
ALICE SPRINGS, NT, 0871.

Cover photo: The Devil's Marbles, Tourism NT  
Published by the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport

# Foreword

## **Traditional Owners Message**

A long time ago - this story about Karlu Karlu...

In the Dreamtime Traditional Owners used that place for ceremony. They came from four parts of the land to spend their time together for three to four weeks, dancing and singing to the spirit people, giving praises to them so that they would bless the land and give them what they need.

Each tribe came and performed their ceremony. The tribes were Warlpiri, Warumungu, Kaytetye and Alyawarra. Women were separated from the men, when the ceremonies were finished they came together and waited for the sign that everything was finished. They then went their separate ways.

Today these four groups have come together to work on this plan for Karlu Karlu with Parks, working together, planning for the future. Parks and Wildlife Service are welcome to come here and work together with us, sharing and caring for our country.

**Kirda and Kurdungurlu  
Karlu Karlu**

## Message from the Minister

The Devil's Marbles is a living cultural landscape and the traditional country of the Warumungu, Kaytetye, Warlpiri and Alyawarra peoples. Known as Karlu Karlu in all local Aboriginal languages, the Devil's Marbles are integral to the continuation of important dreamings that hold the land and its people together. Under their law, Traditional Owners have lived on, cared for, and been provided for, by this land. And, after struggling for many years to be recognised as the original and rightful owners of Karlu Karlu, the Traditional Owners were finally granted formal title to the area under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act, on 28 October, 2008.



The Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve is also an important tourism attraction of the Barkly region, welcoming around 100,000 visitors each year. It is a nationally and internationally recognisable symbol of the Northern Territory's outback.

Recent changes to the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* bring exciting new opportunities for joint management partnerships with the Aboriginal Traditional Owners of Northern Territory parks and reserves. The Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve is the second reserve to have a Joint Management Plan completed under these changes.

This Plan recognises Traditional Owners' connection to their country under Territory law. It protects their sites, represents their aspirations for social development, and facilitates their desire to be successful joint managers.

This Plan sets out an optimistic vision for the reserve and practical steps for its management. Visitors will continue to enjoy the area as before, but will also have opportunities to see it from the perspective of Traditional Owners themselves. The plan also highlights ways for Traditional Owners to achieve employment and economic benefit from the reserve. I am confident the public will welcome the reserve's future as outlined by this Plan.

I am encouraged by the goodwill and positive collaboration between Traditional Owners of the Devil's Marbles and the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service in completing this Joint Management Plan. I also extend my thanks to the Central Land Council for their assistance in bringing this Plan into effect.

**Ms Alison Anderson MLA**  
**Minister for Parks and Wildlife**

## How This Plan Was Developed

This is the second management plan for the Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve. It has been prepared by a planning committee consisting of Warumungu, Kaytetye, Warlpiri and Alyawarra Traditional Owners of the reserve, Central Land Council staff and Parks and Wildlife Service staff, with input from land managers, the tourism industry, business operators and the community.

In 2005, the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* was amended, requiring new management plans to be developed for jointly managed parks scheduled within the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*. Section 25 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* lists the objectives and principles of joint management and the contents that must be included in this plan.

Planning for the joint management of the reserve began with a large meeting of Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Service staff, in late 2005. The meeting established a planning team of twelve Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife Service staff and Central Land Council (CLC) staff. During 2006, this team drafted the Joint Management Plan through a series of participatory planning meetings with many hours of discussion. In March 2007, the draft Plan was reviewed and approved by a full meeting of Traditional Owners before being released for public comment.

This Joint Management Plan has come into effect following consultation with the community, approval by the Legislative Assembly, and subsequent gazettal by the Minister. It supersedes the 1992 Plan of Management and will be effective for a minimum of five years unless amended or replaced by a new plan.



*The Joint Management Planning Team preparing the Joint Management Plan for the Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve (2006) consisting of Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife and Central Land Council staff. Photo: Steve Nicholson.*

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## Summary of this Plan

Travellers on the Stuart Highway get to experience a range of the Territory's natural landscapes and landmarks, none more famous than the Devil's Marbles. The reserve is a welcome highway stop for about 100,000 visitors each year. Most stay only an hour or so exploring the boulders, taking photographs and learning about the area's nature and culture from interpretative signs. A significant number stay longer, making use of camping facilities and taking time to absorb the mystery of the marbles.

Management of the reserve will focus on presenting the reserve to visitors as a symbol of the Territory, one that is part of a wider cultural landscape of continuing spiritual meaning to its Aboriginal Traditional Owners. In recognition of this, the name of the reserve will be changed to incorporate the area's original name, *Karlu Karlu*. There are real opportunities at this reserve for the Territory tourist's interest in rich and memorable cultural experiences to meet with Traditional Owners' interest in developing cultural tourism enterprise. The joint management partners will need to work with other agencies to realise this opportunity. Related business prospects include Traditional Owners as campground managers and hosts.

As a small reserve, its ability to contribute to biodiversity conservation on its own is limited. The larger Davenport Ranges National Park in the same bioregion is a more viable protected area in which to invest resources for wildlife conservation. Management of weeds and fire will therefore focus on the protection of the cultural and scenic values of the visitor area. The reserve is surrounded by Aboriginal land of the same tenure and future opportunities for cooperative conservation may present during the term of this Plan.

This plan provides an outline of effective, equitable partnership and governance of the reserve. In this respect it cannot answer every question and in itself this plan does not ensure success. The partners must commit, especially in the first years, to making joint management successful. They will receive governance training and matters of governance will need to be further developed. Establishing simple and useful monitoring and evaluation techniques as an aid to continuous improvement, and developing policy and procedure for activities requiring special permits are high priorities.

Whilst day to day management of the reserve will remain the responsibility of the Parks and Wildlife Service, Traditional Owners will have the opportunity to access country and pass on knowledge during planned programs and joint management activities, with need for few additional management resources. If necessary external resources will be pursued to assist Traditional Owners' meet with other culturally-based interests. In addition to being a vital support in many other ways, the Central Land Council may also help in this regard.



**Figure 1. The Joint Management Story – Artist: Sheila Braedon © 2006**

'This painting is about working together to make the plan for the Devil's Marbles (Karlukarlu). Karlukarlu is represented by the centre circle. The people sitting in groups on the outskirts represent the people in the community who will be involved in working at the Devil's Marbles in the future. The four people sitting at the top of the circle represent Parks and Wildlife staff. The two people sitting on each side represent Central Land Council staff and the people sitting at the base of the painting represent the Traditional Owner planning group.' **Sheila Braedon, 2006**

# 1. Introduction

## Introducing the Reserve and this Plan

The 'Devil's Marbles' or 'Karlukarlu' with its gigantic, rounded granite boulders, some spectacularly poised, is a remarkable landscape. Scattered clusters of these 'marbles' are spread across a wide, shallow valley.

The Devil's Marbles is a nationally and internationally recognised symbol of Australia's outback.

In 2007, about 100,000 people visited the reserve. It is one of the most visited of any park or reserve in the Northern Territory and one of the main tourist attractions in the Barkly region.

This plan interchangeably refers to the reserve as Karlukarlu or the Devil's Marbles. Karlukarlu, translated literally as 'round boulders' is the name for the area shared between Kaytetye, Warumungu, Warlpiri and Alyawarra language groups. The area recognised by Traditional Owners as Karlukarlu extends well beyond the boulders associated with the visited area and is consistent with the general boundary of the reserve. The name 'Devil's Marbles' originally arose from comments made by John Ross leading a survey for the Overland Telegraph line in 1870:

*'This is the Devil's country; he's even emptied his bag of marbles around the place!' John Ross, 1870*

Nearly the whole reserve is a registered sacred site under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*. The reserve remains significant to the Kaytetye, Warumungu, Warlpiri and Alyawarra Traditional Owners, whose ancestors have managed the area since creation time. The reserve is listed on the Register of the National Estate as a site of national significance for its extraordinary geological formations. It is also nominated for listing on the Northern Territory Heritage Register.

The Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve (N.T. Portion 539) covers an area of 1802 hectares and is located 105 kilometres south of Tennant Creek and 393 kilometres north of Alice Springs (see Map 1). The reserve is bounded by the Mungkarta Aboriginal Land Trust. The nearest settlements include Wauchope, Wakurlpu, Wycliffe Well and Mungkarta (see Map 2).

The area was proclaimed a reserve in 1961 under section 103 of the *Crown Lands Ordinance*.

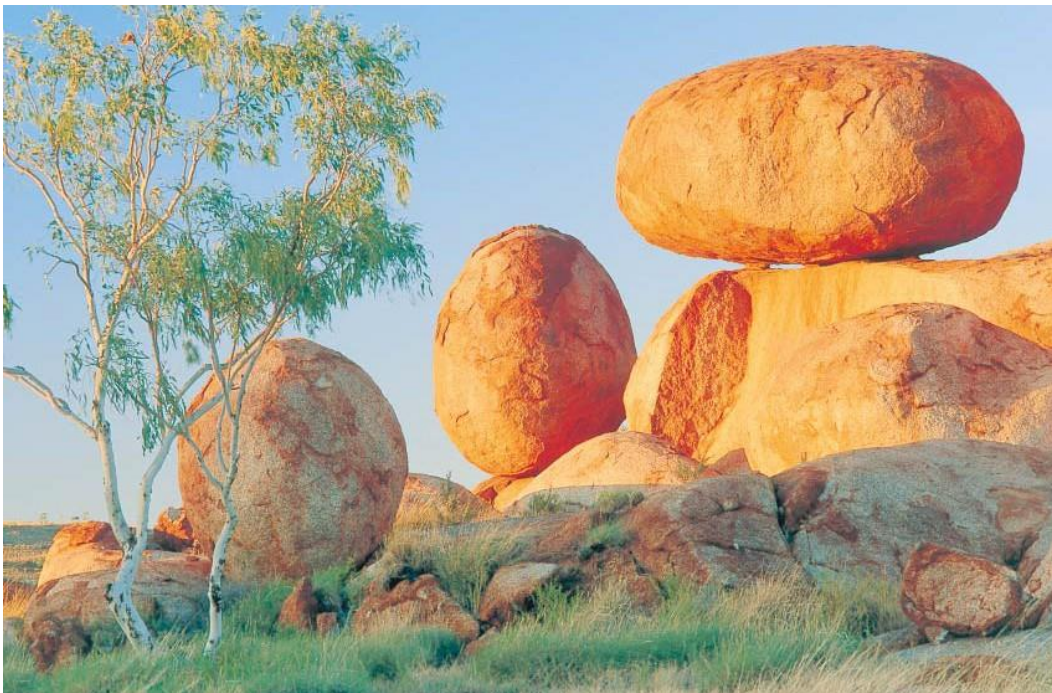
This Reservation (R1064) was revoked and the area re-declared under section 12 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* in 1978. In 1979, the reserve was renamed The Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve (NTG G38).

In 2003, the reserve was listed on Schedule 1 of the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*, enabling the title to be granted to Traditional Owners under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* as Aboriginal Freehold Land leased to the Northern Territory Government and managed under agreed joint management arrangements. Title to the reserve was granted to the Ayleparrarntenhe Aboriginal Land Trust in October 2008.

### ***Purpose of this Plan***

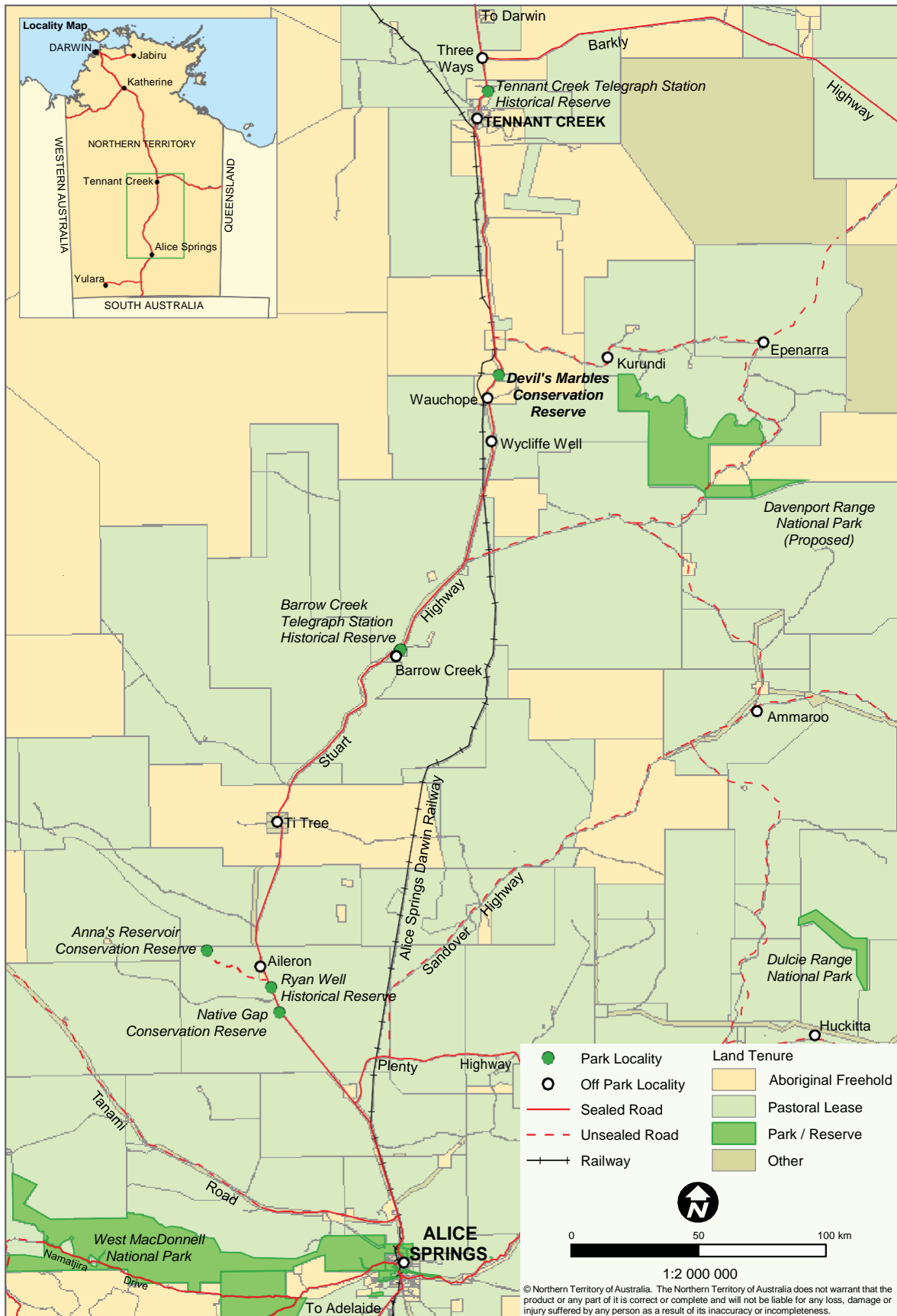
This Plan gives direction to the day-to-day management of the reserve. It provides for the ongoing conservation of the reserve's significant cultural values and continued public use and enjoyment. It sets out how public interests in the reserve will be served while recognising the significance of the area to its Traditional Owners. It sets management objectives against which the Parks and Wildlife Service, Traditional Owners and the general public may measure progress. The plan presents both general and specific management directions with respect to the reserve's stated purpose and current management issues. It also outlines measures that will ensure future development of the reserve is well-considered and appropriate.

***'The road is straight ... rangers and traditional owners together. Keeps all together ... we have to talk about all our different directions, ideas and journeys first. We are here to get that road straight and work that out ... to get things right.' 'There's always change ... but we need to agree to plan and stick to it' Kirda and Kurdungurlu***



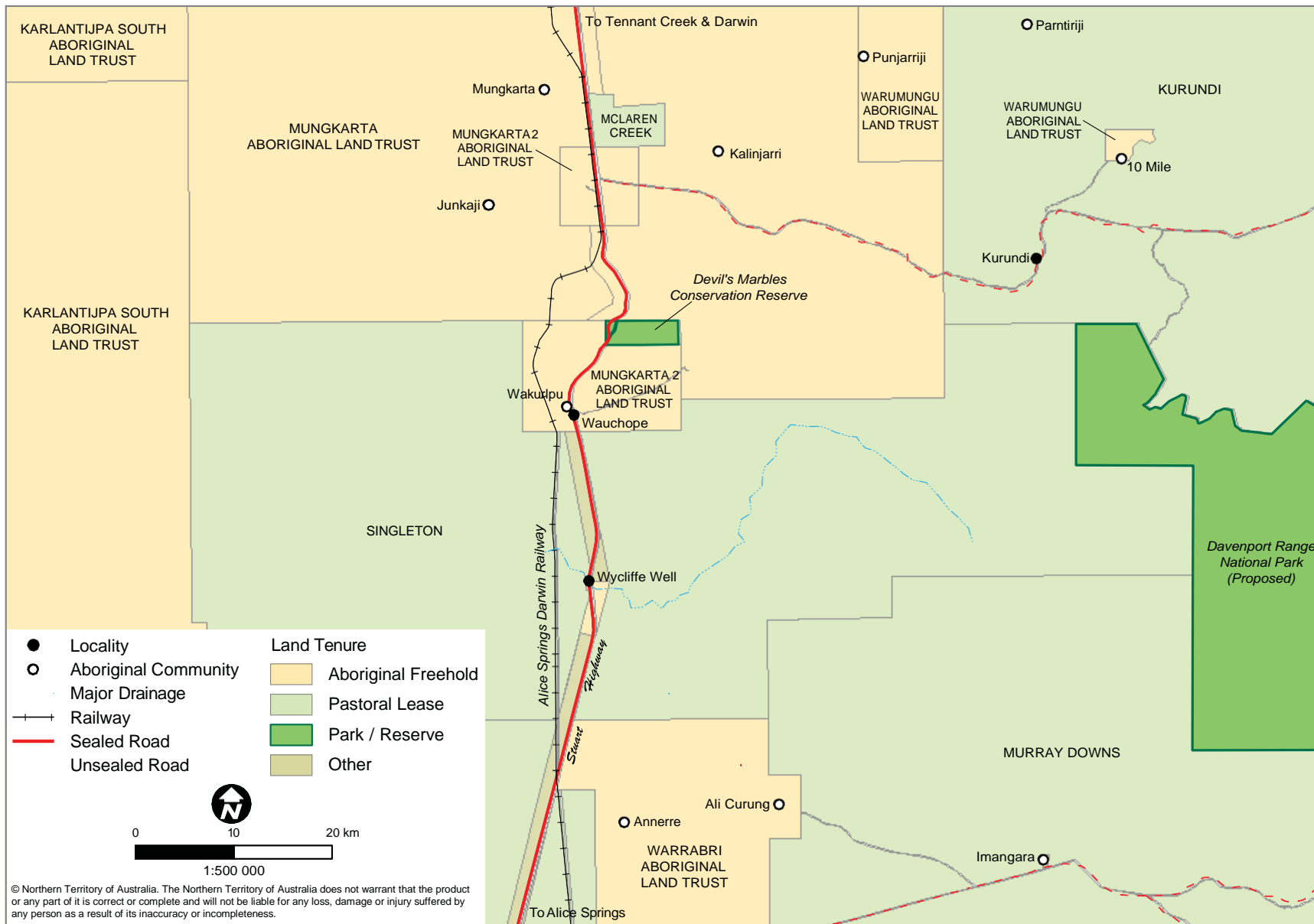
*The Devil's Marbles. Photo: Tourism NT.*





Map 1: Location Map

Map 2: Land Tenure Map





## Vision

*To work as partners,  
50/50, straight and true.*

During the next ten years and beyond the Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service will:

- Respect each other and take pride in our country, our culture and our partnership.
- Keep our country healthy.
- Teach and share knowledge for the next generations.
- Involve everyone, especially young people, old people and families.
- Not just talk.

## Purpose of the Reserve

Karlu Karlu will be managed as a cultural landscape for the benefit of both the Traditional Owners and visitors. Priorities will be to:

- Meet the needs of Traditional Owners to maintain connection to their country and to gain meaningful economic benefit from the area.
- Provide visitors with a memorable experience based on the reserve's iconic outback scenery and its lasting connection to powerful cultural traditions.
- Preserve the area's outstanding scenic qualities.
- Encourage community and visitors' understanding and appreciation of the reserve's cultural values.

## Values

The values of the Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve are the attributes that give the reserve worth and provide the basis for reservation. These values are subject to consideration throughout this Plan.

### **Cultural Values**

Karlu Karlu is of major significance to Traditional Owners of the Kaytetye, Warumungu, Warlpiri and Alyawarra language groups. Almost the entire reserve is a registered sacred site under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* (see Map 3). It is a cultural landscape imbued with spiritual significance that is central to Traditional Owners' identity. Their affiliation with the land involves a complex set of traditional rights, benefits, obligations and responsibilities. Stories and traditions, sacred sites and related "dreamings" are important elements of the reserve's cultural value. While only some of these traditions can be shared with outsiders, they strongly relate the interconnectedness of the land and its people. In terms of maintaining living culture these values are significant to the broader community as well as Traditional Owners.

### ***Scenic and Tourism Values***

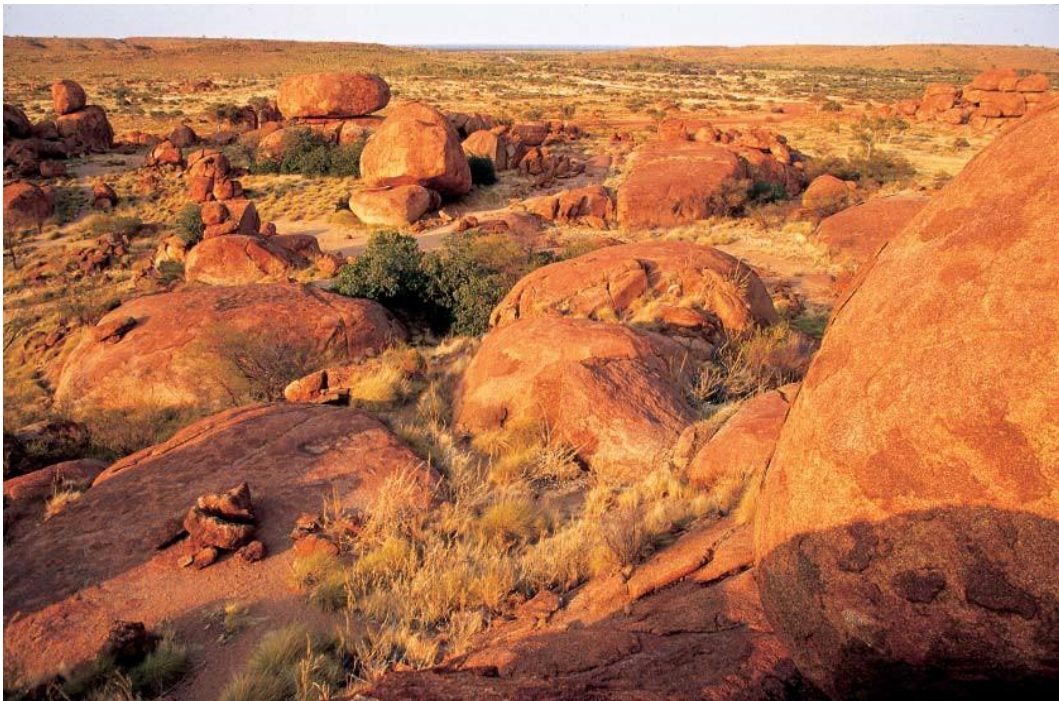
The Devil's Marbles are one of outback Australia's most widely photographed and recognised symbols. Images of the giant granite boulders are frequently used to represent the Northern Territory or Australian outback in national and international tourism promotion. The reserve is the main natural attraction in the Tennant Creek region and a very popular attraction and resting point for travellers on the Stuart Highway.

### ***Natural Values***

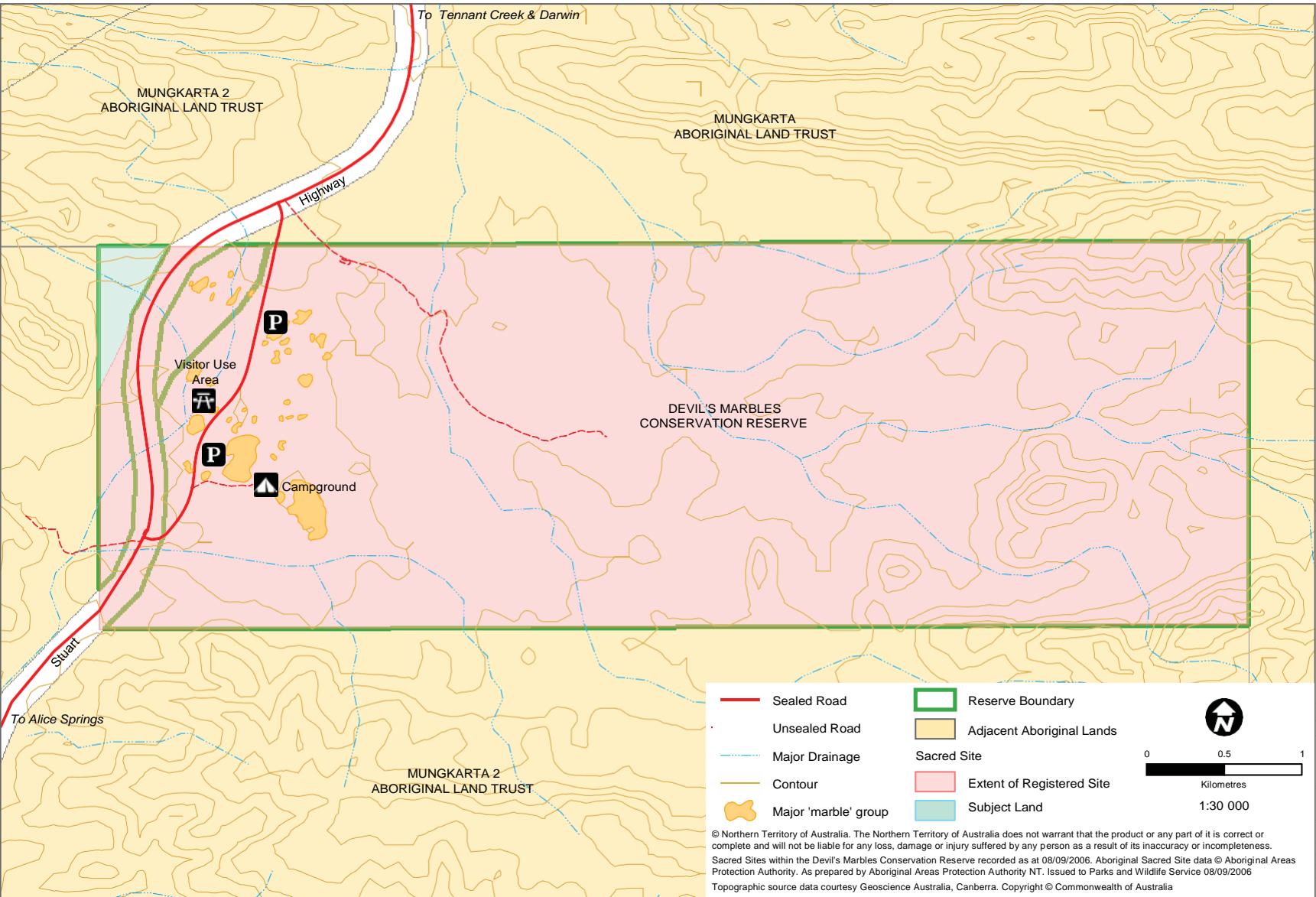
The reserve has no outstanding wildlife values. It contains representative samples of native flora and fauna typical of the western Davenport Ranges.

### ***Historic and Education Values***

The reserve's natural and cultural heritage has value for science and education. Its geomorphology, flora, fauna, archaeology and anthropology contribute to scientific knowledge and education, including information for the general public. The reserve also preserves remnants of past mining and other activities of local historical value.



*Photo: Tourism NT*



Map 3 Sacred Sites Map





**Figure 2. Karlu Karlu – Artist: Sheila Braedon ©2006**

‘The four outer circles represent the language groups—Warumungu on the northern side, Alyawarra on the eastern side, Kaytetye on the southern side and Warlpiri on the western side.

The centre circle represents Karlu Karlu. The plant connected to the centre circle is the fig, which is the only fruit found in Karlu Karlu. The bush tucker painted on the periphery of the painting is found on the outskirts of Karlu Karlu.’

‘The footprints represent groups walking in to Karlu Karlu. The main people who stayed at Karlu Karlu in the Dreamtime were the Alyawarra people. The other tribes came in later, all sharing their culture amongst each other. However the Alyawarra then left and moved to the east. The other three tribes remained and the Alyawarra people come back to visit.’ **Sheila Braedon, 2006**

## The Joint Management Partners

Consistent with the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, the partners responsible for decision making and management are the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) and the reserve's Traditional Owners. The joint management partnership is shown graphically in Figures 3a and 3b.

### **Traditional Owners**

Traditional Owners of Karlu Karlu welcome joint management and have been involved in both planning and on-ground work to bring it to reality. Karlu Karlu is located in a boundary area for a number of language groups, and as such is a culturally diverse area. Traditionally, it was visited and used by Warumungu, Kaytetye, Warlpiri and Alyawarra language speakers. Traditional Owners today describe the area as 'Warumungu-Kaytetye mix up country.' The *Kelantyerrang*, *Wakurlpu* and *Waake* estate or local descent groups hold primary custodial responsibility for the land. The language of the Kelantyerrang estate group is Warumungu, while Kaytetye is the language of the Wakurlpu and Waake estates. Alyawarra and Warlpiri groups also have ownership rights.

Many aspects of culture are explained by reference to land and the journeys, activities and interactions of the ancestral beings or *Wirnkarra* dreamings that continue to give life to the land and identity to its people. Features such as rock outcrops, trees or waterholes are the embodiment of these beings and their actions, and are known as sacred sites. Family or local descent groups take spiritual responsibility for clusters of sacred sites that define their country or estate through descent from the ancestral beings. The Kelantyerrang and Wakurlpu estate groups make up Karlu Karlu (see Appendix 3 Traditional Owners and their Connection to Country for further information).

The whole area of the reserve is known as *Ayleparrarntenhe*, which is also the name of the place of origin and final resting place of *Arrange* the Devil Man—a twin peaked hill to the east of the reserve. Traditional Owners tell the story of how the Marbles came into being:

*Arrange, the Devil Man, came from Ayleparrarntenhe and travelled through the area. During his journey, he was making a hair belt (as worn by initiated men). Twirling the hair into strings, Arrange dropped clusters of hair on the ground. These turned into the Karlu Karlu boulders that can be seen today. On his way back, Arrange spat on the ground. His spit also turned into the granite boulders which dot the central part of the reserve. Arrange finally returned to his place of origin, Ayleparrarntenhe.*

In the past access to the marbles area of Karlu Karlu, where visitors now camp, was strictly regulated. It was not a place that anyone could visit. Only certain respected and knowledgeable senior people visited there for important ceremonial purposes. The central part of the reserve, however, was used for hunting and gathering bush foods and medicines. People would also visit the central area to perform ceremonies and maintain sites. Waterholes were particularly important and were used by people camping and passing through.

Over the past 130 years, a number of major events have affected the Traditional Owners and their use of the country. The Barrow Creek massacre in 1874 had far-reaching effects on the Kaytetye of the Wakurlpu estate. Later in 1928, the Coniston massacres were also felt heavily by the Kaytetye and their Warlpiri neighbours and affected traditional life for decades after.



*Photo: Tourism NT*

Severe droughts may have played a part in these massacres. During these times competition over land and water resources intensified, leading to conflict with pastoralists. These violent events led to the widespread dispersal of Aboriginal people from their country throughout the region, pushing them to the fringes of towns and government settlements.

William Curtis, a local Aboriginal man, was instrumental in the discovery and development of the nearby Wauchope tungsten field. Tungsten mining commenced at Hatches Creek in 1913-14 and in Wauchope in 1917 and continued until the late 1950's. Mining had a considerable influence on the lives of Aboriginal people in the region. The mines relied heavily on Aboriginal labour and there are still remnants of mining activity on the reserve today.

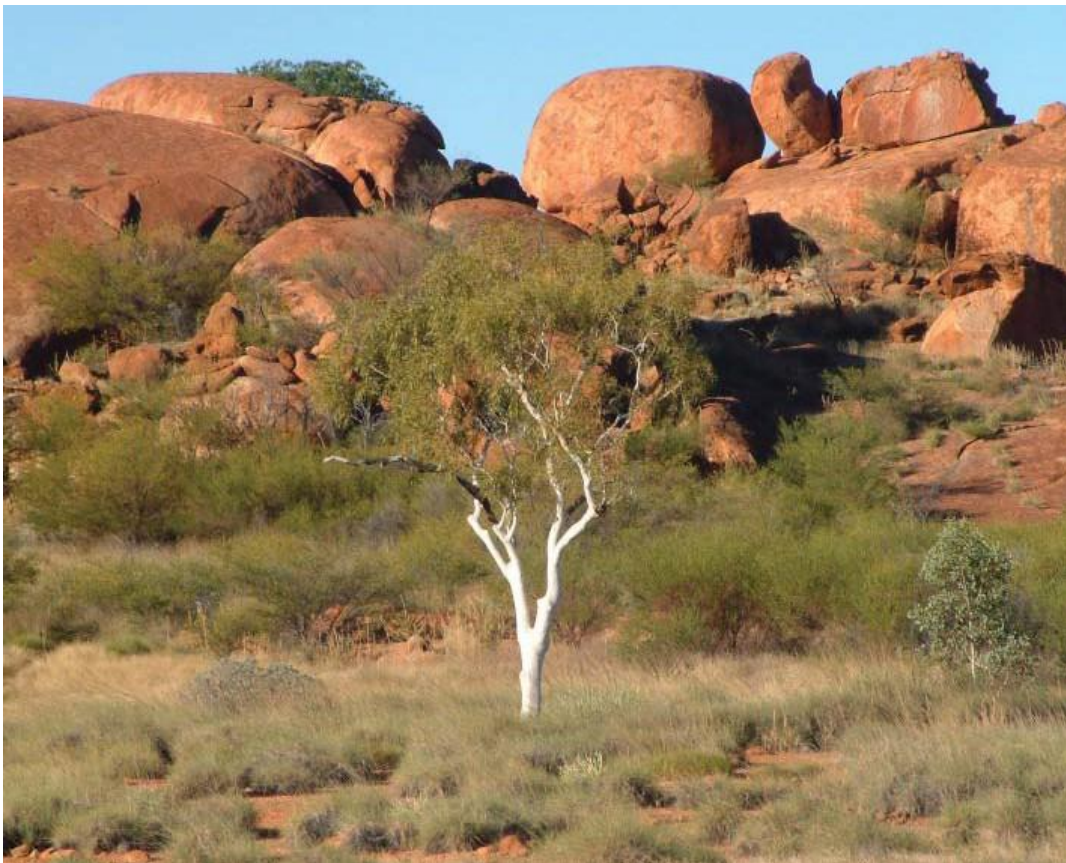
In the mid 1950's, the establishment of the Warrabri Mission (now Ali Curung community) resulted in Warumungu and Warlpiri people being moved onto Kaytetye country. The mission was an expression of the assimilation policies of the time, which aimed to teach Aboriginal people how to behave like white Australians.

Despite the dislocation caused by these events, Traditional Owners continued to maintain their strong cultural links with the reserve. Today, many live on outstations on Aboriginal lands throughout the Barkly region, or in Tennant Creek. Over the last 40 years, they have persistently pursued every available opportunity to regain ownership of the area. Often under extremely difficult circumstances associated with major infrastructure development proposals, they have demonstrated their determination to protect and, where required, restore the cultural integrity of the site. Below is a list of significant events in the efforts of Traditional Owners to assert their rights to Karlu Karlu and their country:

- 1874 – Barrow Creek Massacre.
- 1928 – Coniston Massacres.
- 1930s – Many local people sought refuge in or were escorted to government reserves.
- 1953 – A boulder is removed and relocated to Alice Springs for John Flynn's gravestone.



- 1961 – The area becomes a reserve under section 103 of the *Crown Lands Ordinance*.
- 1976 – The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* becomes law.
- 1978 – Land title for the reserve is transferred to the Conservation Land Corporation.
- 1979 – The reserve is renamed the Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve.
- 1980 – The reserve is included in the Warumungu Land Claim application.
- 1982 – Almost the entire reserve is registered as a sacred site by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority.
- 1983 – The Warumungu land claim is submitted to the High Court, which finds that the portion covered by the reserve is not to be included because it is alienated Crown land ineligible for claim.
- 1984 – Traditional Owners make numerous requests for direct negotiations with the Northern Territory Government regarding ownership of the reserve and involvement in its management.
- 1990s – Traditional Owners are successful in re-routing the Alice Springs to Darwin railway line to outside the reserve.
- 1997 – A second land claim is lodged for the reserve.
- 1999 – Traditional Owners successfully negotiate the return of the boulder removed for John Flynn's gravestone.



*The Devil's Marbles. Photo: Barritt and May*

- 2002 – A Native Title application is lodged for the reserve.
- 2003 – New Northern Territory Government joint management initiatives are discussed with Traditional Owners.
- 2003 – A meeting at Wakurlpu leads to agreement for the reserve to become Aboriginal Freehold land under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*.
- 2004 – Traditional Owners accept the Northern Territory Government’s offer of Aboriginal Freehold title in exchange for a 99-year lease and joint management arrangements.
- 2005 – Consultations begin to prepare a joint management plan for the reserve.
- 2008 – Traditional Owners are granted title to Karlu Karlu and immediately lease the reserve back to the Northern Territory Government for 99 years.

With the return of their land and the establishment of joint management, Traditional Owners feel a greater sense of security not only for the protection of their sacred sites but also for their children and grandchildren’s future. A key element of joint management agreements under the *Parks and Reserves Framework for the Future Act* is the Northern Territory Government’s emphasis on relevant work, training and enterprise opportunities for local Aboriginal people. These include direct employment by the Parks and Wildlife Service, employment through business contracts and the provision of services to visitors.

### ***The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service***

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment the Arts and Sport, through the NT Parks and Wildlife Service is responsible for managing, protecting and preserving the Territory’s parks estate, comprising some 87 parks and reserves with a total area of nearly 47 000 square kilometres. The Parks and Wildlife Service is a professional, predominantly field-based organisation with rangers supported by scientific, planning, management and administration staff.

The Devil’s Marbles Conservation Reserve is an un-staffed reserve, currently managed as part of the Parks and Wildlife Barkly District operations based in Tennant Creek. The Barkly District operations currently support a range of conservation reserves and parks including the proposed Davenport Ranges National Park, Devil’s Marbles Conservation Reserve, Tennant Creek Telegraph Station, Barrow Creek Telegraph Station and Connell’s Lagoon Conservation Reserve.

At the time of this plan’s preparation, the Tennant Creek management team consisted of three permanent staff including one Aboriginal ranger recently graduated from a traineeship.

***‘Everyone agrees we want to work together ... need to focus and get the young people ... by working together we are showing them’ Kirda and Kurdungurlu***

Figure 3a. The Joint Management Partners



**1. The Laws**

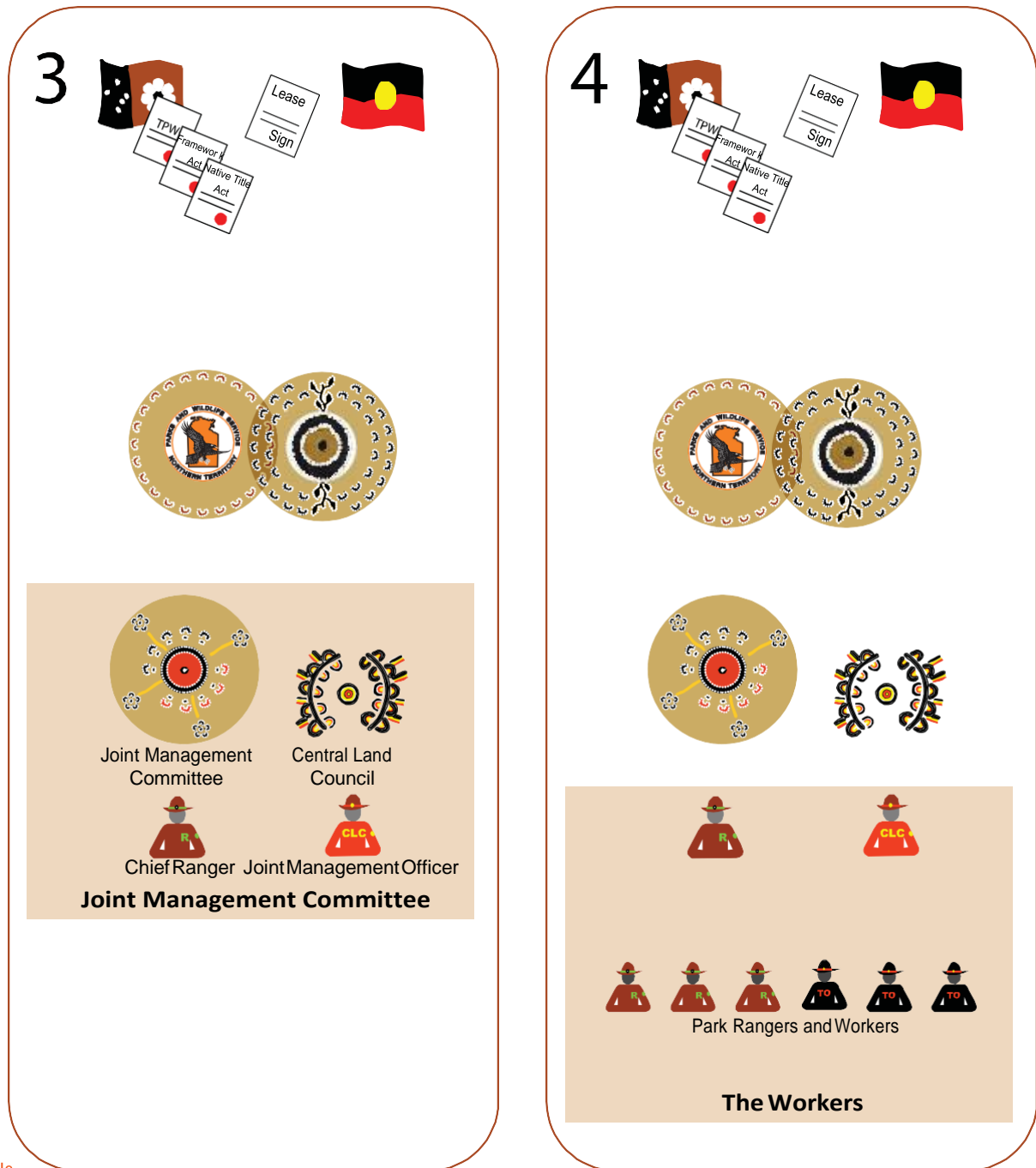
**Government and Laws** In 2005, the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* was changed to provide for joint management of parks and reserves affected by the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*. The Devil's Marbles is one of the reserves to come under the new joint management arrangements. **The Lease** provides for the reserve to be managed according to the laws and the joint management plan. **Aboriginal Law** These laws ensure that Traditional Owners' rights and traditional responsibilities are recognised and respected.

**2. The Joint Management Partners**

The Northern Territory Government's **Parks and Wildlife Service** is responsible for the reserve's day-to-day management under the guidance of the Joint Management Committee. The **Traditional Aboriginal Owners** of the reserve (Kirda and Kurdungurlu) are responsible for managing traditional knowledge, looking after the land and its resources, maintaining sacred sites and keeping the country alive.

A glossary of graphics is presented in Appendix 4

Figure 3b. The Joint Management Partners



**3. The Joint Management Committee**

The **Joint Management Committee** will be the principal decision-making body for managing the reserve consistent with the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*. The committee will consist of **Traditional Owners** and **Parks and Wildlife** and will meet at least annually to prepare and review annual action plans. If needed, the Joint Management Committee can establish **advisory groups** of Traditional Owners to give advice on matters that occur between annual meetings. The **Central Land Council** will represent and support Traditional Owners’ interests, and help make the joint management partnership strong and fair.

**4. The Workers**

**Traditional Owners** and **park rangers** will jointly implement management programs and action plans. Participation, training, employment and business outcomes for Traditional Owners will be actively pursued.

## 2. How Joint Management Will Work

### Objectives and Principles for Joint Management

Joint Management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service working together, exchanging their knowledge and expertise, solving problems and sharing decisions.

The *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, states the objective of joint management as:

To jointly establish an equitable partnership to manage and maintain the park or reserve as part of a comprehensive and representative system of parks and reserves in the Territory for the following purposes:

- (a) benefiting both the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve and the wider community;
- (b) protecting biological diversity;
- (c) serving visitor and community needs for education and enjoyment.

The *Act* states that the objective is to be achieved by managing the park or reserve in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) recognising, valuing and incorporating Aboriginal culture, knowledge and decision making processes;
- (b) utilising the combined land management skills and expertise of both joint management partners;
- (c) recognising and addressing the need for institutional support and capacity building of the joint management partners;
- (d) recognising that community living areas in or in close proximity to parks and reserves are an integral part of the natural and cultural resource management of parks and reserves;
- (e) involving continuing statutory responsibilities and functions of the Minister with respect to parks and reserves;
- (f) managing parks and reserves may include cooperative management agreements for areas of land outside parks and reserves;
- (g) establishing a process for the consideration of applications for mining and petroleum.

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## Roles and Responsibilities

Both partners, the Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service, bring legal and moral responsibilities to the management of the reserve to take account of traditional and Northern Territory law.

Joint management of the reserve will be consistent with the following:

- *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*;
- *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* and *Native Title Act*;
- *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* and *Heritage Conservation Act*;
- *Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA)*;
- The lease (in which the reserve is leased by Traditional Owners to the NT Government);
- Customary protocols and traditional practices associated with Karlu Karlu;
- The Australia ICOMOS charter for places of cultural significance;
- This Joint Management Plan; and
- The decisions agreed by the Devil's Marbles Joint Management Committee.

**Traditional Owners** provide an important contribution to the direction and management of the reserve. Particular clan estates and skin groups have responsibilities for decision making, ownership and caretaking. Traditional Owners also have responsibilities for managing Aboriginal

knowledge and passing it on to the right people, looking after the land and its resources, maintaining sacred sites and keeping the country alive.

The **Parks and Wildlife Service** is responsible for the day-to-day management of the reserve under the direction of the Joint Management Committee. The Parks and Wildlife Service is required to finance and resource the reserve's ongoing management including administrative functions, staffing, infrastructure and services.

The **Central Land Council** (CLC) has an important role in assisting joint management. The *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* defines the CLC's role as representing and protecting the interests of the Traditional Owners in relation to the reserve's management.

The Aboriginal lands that are the subject of the Joint Management Plan will be Aboriginal freehold lands that are held by the Ayleparrarntenhe Aboriginal Land Trust in accordance with the Commonwealth *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*. The land trust holds the title on behalf of Traditional Owners. This Act requires the Central Land Council (CLC) to ascertain and represent the interests of Traditional Owners with respect to any proposed use of their land.

***'We all from different cultures ... together we are all Australians ... we need to make it strong together and work as partners ... and respect all our cultures' Kirda and Kurdungurlu***



## Aboriginal Decision Making

Traditional ownership and decision making rights over the Kelantjerrang and Wakurlpu lands that make up Karlu Karlu are established in a number of ways. The main ownership rights to country are inherited patrilineally - the father's father's country. Estate group members who hold this right belong to the *Kingili* moiety and are known as *Kirda*, which translates as 'owner'.

Ownership rights can also be defined matrilineally through the mother's father's country.

These members belong to the *Wuluru* moiety and acquire the role of *Kurdungurlu*, which is often described as 'advisor', 'manager', 'caretaker' or 'policeman'. The *Kurdungurlu* are the keepers of the group's religious knowledge and ensure correct performance of ceremonial rituals by the *Kirda*.

The partnership of *Kirda* and *Kurdungurlu* is very important because it ensures the life of the group and its traditions are continued. Any decision to do with land, whether focussed on traditional matters or contemporary land use issues, requires the consent of both *Kirda* and *Kurdungurlu*.

A third category of traditional ownership and decision-making rights at Karlu Karlu is inherited through shared 'dreaming lines'. There is shared ownership of a dreaming story, the *Wakuwarlpa* (bush plum) story associated with Karlu Karlu, whose ancestor travelled through the Antarrangeny estate (further to the south east and held by Alyawarra speakers) and the estates directly associated with Karlu Karlu. The people who share this dreaming line provide support to the *Kirda* of Karlu Karlu. The *Kirda* and *Kurdungurlu* of the estate group, and the people who are responsible for the dreaming story that is connected to Karlu Karlu, act cooperatively in the decision making process relating to Karlu Karlu. These traditional principles of land ownership and decision making are still strictly adhered to today. During planning consultations, Traditional Owners provided the following insights to traditional decision making for the reserve.

***'No one Traditional Owner can make a decision.'***

***'Ask Traditional Owners ... Kirda (owner) has to go to the Kurdungurlu (caretaker). He or she must muster the caretakers. If the Kirda says yes and the Kurdungurlu says no then it is no. No one has the final say. They both need to agree ... they sort of level but not level ... (Kurdungurlu are) not the owners ... but they got to have a say ... That's their job (the Kurdungurlu) ... they responsible if anything goes wrong.'***

***'Big mob them Kurdungurlu ... can't just go to one ... need to go to all ... the right Kurdungurlu ... if anything goes wrong then its the Kurdungurlu that gets in trouble.'***

***'The Kirda is the boss ... the Kurdungurlu is the worker.'***

*'They both got to make the decision ... the Kirda sits and listens ... the Kurdungurlu is the one that talks ... must be right Kurdungurlu from his mother's side ... it's his obligation ... his father's country is the Kirda ... they talk themselves then that would be right.*

*It's all there ... all time ... still here today ... it'll never change.'*

*"We make the decision ... nephew and niece they make the decision*

*... that's good ... they're still happy ... that's the system ... and talk about this plan of management.'*

*'It's important that rangers know this process.'* **Kirda and Kurdungurlu**



*The Devil's Marbles. Photo: Barritt & May*

*Strong culture and country ... we are together and doing this together ... the right thing for this place ... so future generations can see ... if you mob gone (participating Parks and CLC staff) ... they can learn about what is planned ... and by working together.'* **Kirda and Kurdungurlu**

## **Making Decisions and Working Together**

### ***Principles for Making Decisions and Working Together***

Joint decision making for Karlu Karlu will be guided by the following principles:

- Trust, respect and good communication underlie a strong partnership.
- Sharing decisions, responsibility and participation is important.
- Aboriginal decision-making will be respected.
- Joint management should be monitored for continuous improvement.
- The principles of joint management as stated in the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*.

### ***Our Aims***

- To manage the reserve through decisions made equitably, efficiently and responsibly with sound information and understanding between the partners.
- To effectively involve Traditional Owners in decision-making and practical management of the reserve.
- To keep the partnership strong while focussing on results.

### ***Background***

#### ***Combining Knowledge, Working Together***

The inclusion of Traditional Owners' knowledge and perspectives will bring changes to the way the reserve has been managed in the past. Importantly, Traditional Owners wish not only to have a say in the reserve's management, but seek to actively participate in many aspects of on-the-ground management. Figure 4 summarises how the partners will share decision-making and work together on management programs.

#### ***Building Capacity and Governance***

The preparation of this plan by the joint management partners marks a positive beginning to the joint management of Karlu Karlu. The Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Service also know their partnership will need to continue to grow through experience and conscious effort. This plan sets out the framework for the reserve's governance. In doing so it marks a solid start, but in itself this will not guarantee effective governance. The partners both believe that the goodwill between them will need to be complemented with commitment to monitoring joint management effectiveness and developing strong governance over time. For the purposes of this plan *governance* means how the partners organise themselves to work towards their vision. It includes all aspects of communication, partnership, planning and decision-making.

#### ***Extending the Reserve***

The reserve is bounded on all sides by Aboriginal land; the Mungkarta and Mungkarta 2 Aboriginal Land Trusts. Title for these lands are the same as for the reserve; inalienable freehold under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*. At a future time the partners may consider extending the reserve to include adjoining Aboriginal land. There is no such proposal at the time of this Plan's preparation.

#### ***Naming the Reserve***

The Traditional Owners seek to change the name of the reserve to incorporate the name by which they and their ancestors have known the area since the Dreaming; *Karlu Karlu*. It is important to them that visitors gain this understanding also. The Parks and Wildlife Service support the Traditional Owners in this proposal.

### *Community Living Areas*

Through the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*, Traditional Owners have achieved legal ownership of their lands surrounding Karlu Karlu and live on homelands in the reserve's vicinity. They would like improved access to manage their country within the reserve and surrounding the reserve. This plan must describe a process for considering proposals for community living areas on the reserve. See 2.11

### *Infrastructure*

Under the terms of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* and the Lease, this Joint Management Plan must outline the process by which parts of the reserve may be sublet or licensed for commercial or public purposes including public infrastructure. See 2.12

### *Mining*

In 1985 a mining reserve (Reserve from Occupation No 1123) was declared to limit exploration and recovery of minerals within the reserve. The transfer of the reserve to Aboriginal ownership under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* revokes the original Reserve from Occupation. The Traditional Owners feel strongly that mining is not consistent with the scenic, cultural and environmental values of the reserve.

### *Protecting Sacred Sites*

Protection for places of cultural significance to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory is afforded under overlapping legislation. The Commonwealth Aboriginal Land Rights Act (N.T.) 1976 (ALRA) gives legal recognition to areas which that Act terms "sacred sites" and defines as: "a site that is sacred to Aboriginals or is otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal tradition, and includes any land that, under a law of the Northern Territory, is declared to be sacred to Aboriginals or of significance according to Aboriginal tradition". The ALRA makes it an offence to enter or remain on land that is a sacred site. Complementary Northern Territory legislation, the *Northern Territory Sacred Sites Act 1989* (NTASSA) also provides protection for all sites that fall within the scope of this definition. This protection is generally provided in the form of an Authority Certificate from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) in response to land use proposals. It means that the traditional Aboriginal owners have an enforceable right to say who enters their sacred sites, and what can and cannot happen on their sacred sites. Illegal entry, works on or use of a sacred sites is an offence. Almost the entire Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve is a registered sacred site under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*.

Strong joint management will ensure that sacred sites are protected in accordance with Traditional Owners' wishes. Under the ALRA the Central Land Council have a specific function to "assist Aboriginals in the taking of measures likely to assist in the protection of sacred sites" and under its established procedures will carry out this role in facilitating joint management.

### *Heritage Protection*

The *Heritage Conservation Act* provides for the protection and conservation of prescribed archaeological places and objects. Sacred objects are not afforded protection under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*, but through the *Heritage Conservation Act*.

## ***Management Directions***

**2.1 Joint Management Committee** – A Joint Management Committee will be set up to direct the management of the reserve. As a priority, the joint management partners will formally define and document the powers and functions, remuneration and procedures of the committee. The committee will consist of:

- Traditional Owners including both Kirda and Kurdungurlu, selected by and able to represent the interests of all the reserve's Traditional Owners. This will be at least four people.
- At least two Parks and Wildlife Service staff members.
- Other persons invited by the joint management partners to provide advice on particular issues or represent community interests (for example, tourism).

**2.2 Making Decisions** - The joint management partners will share decision-making equitably and responsibly. Decisions will be made by consensus, rather than majority vote. The Joint Management Committee will meet at least once each year. The wider group of Traditional Owners will be informed and encouraged to also attend. Committee responsibilities will include:

- Providing general management direction and advice.
- Reviewing and approving management programs year to year, such as visitor management, community education, weeds, fire and feral animal activities.
- Reviewing and approving special projects, development proposals, local policies and procedures for permits and licences.
- Considering other proposals not otherwise specified in this plan.
- Monitoring and evaluating joint management.

The committee will not be involved in making decisions in relation to day-to-day operations. The Joint Management Committee will approve operations only within the reserve (see Map 4).

Traditional Owner representatives on the committee will not represent the interests of Aboriginal landowners for land outside the reserve in matters not related to the reserve.

**2.3 Traditional Owner Working Groups** – Working groups of Traditional Owners may be formed to work on specific projects, policies or issues. Examples include preparing public education and interpretative material for visitors and considering unusual permit applications.

**2.4 Supporting and Building the Partnership** – The CLC will represent and support Traditional Owners' interests, facilitating consultations and (if needed) conflict resolution. The Partners and CLC recognise that joint management will be a process of continuous learning and growth. Special support and training will be provided to the partners in communication, partnership, planning and governance.

**2.5 Participation of Traditional Owners** – Traditional Owners will have opportunities for paid participation in management programs. Opportunities will be programmed at meetings of the Joint Management Committee.

**2.6 Information Exchange** – Traditional Owners will be kept informed about management activities and issues. Traditional Owner committee members will be responsible for passing on information to other Traditional Owners. Opportunities will also be provided for Traditional Owners to exchange ideas and knowledge with other Aboriginal people engaged in joint management.



**2.7 Monitoring and Evaluation** – The joint management partners will monitor joint management performance as a means to continuous learning and improvement. A monitoring and evaluation program will be developed as a high priority. Selected performance indicators are given in Appendix 1. These are not the only indicators of success and others may be developed and reviewed over time. The program will incorporate performance indicators relating to:

- The satisfaction of the joint management partners.
- The effectiveness of the joint management partnership (joint management processes).
- The implementation of annually agreed priorities.
- Achievement towards longer-term Aims stated in this plan.

**2.8 Extending the Reserve** - Any proposals to extend the reserve by inclusion of adjoining Aboriginal lands will be considered by the joint management partners through the Joint Management Committee and will require additional consultation with Traditional Owners of adjoining lands by the Central Land Council in accordance with the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act*.

**2.9 Resolving Disputes** – The joint management partners will make every effort to make decisions by consensus. From time to time it is possible that, for difficult decisions, ready agreement will not be reached even after respectful discussion and negotiation. Should a dispute arise between the joint management partners that cannot be resolved, in accordance with the Lease, the partners will jointly appoint an independent mediator to help facilitate a final decision.

**2.10 The Name of the Reserve** – As a priority, the joint management partners will seek to change the name of the reserve to incorporate the area's Aboriginal name *Karlu Karlu*.

**2.11 Living on the Reserve** – Any proposal to create community living areas on the reserve will be considered by the full Traditional Owner group.

**2.12 Infrastructure** - With the consent of the Traditional Owners through the Joint Management Committee, and consistent with the Lease, this Joint Management Plan provides for the Northern Territory Government the right to sublease or license portions of the reserve for specific purposes, including public infrastructure.

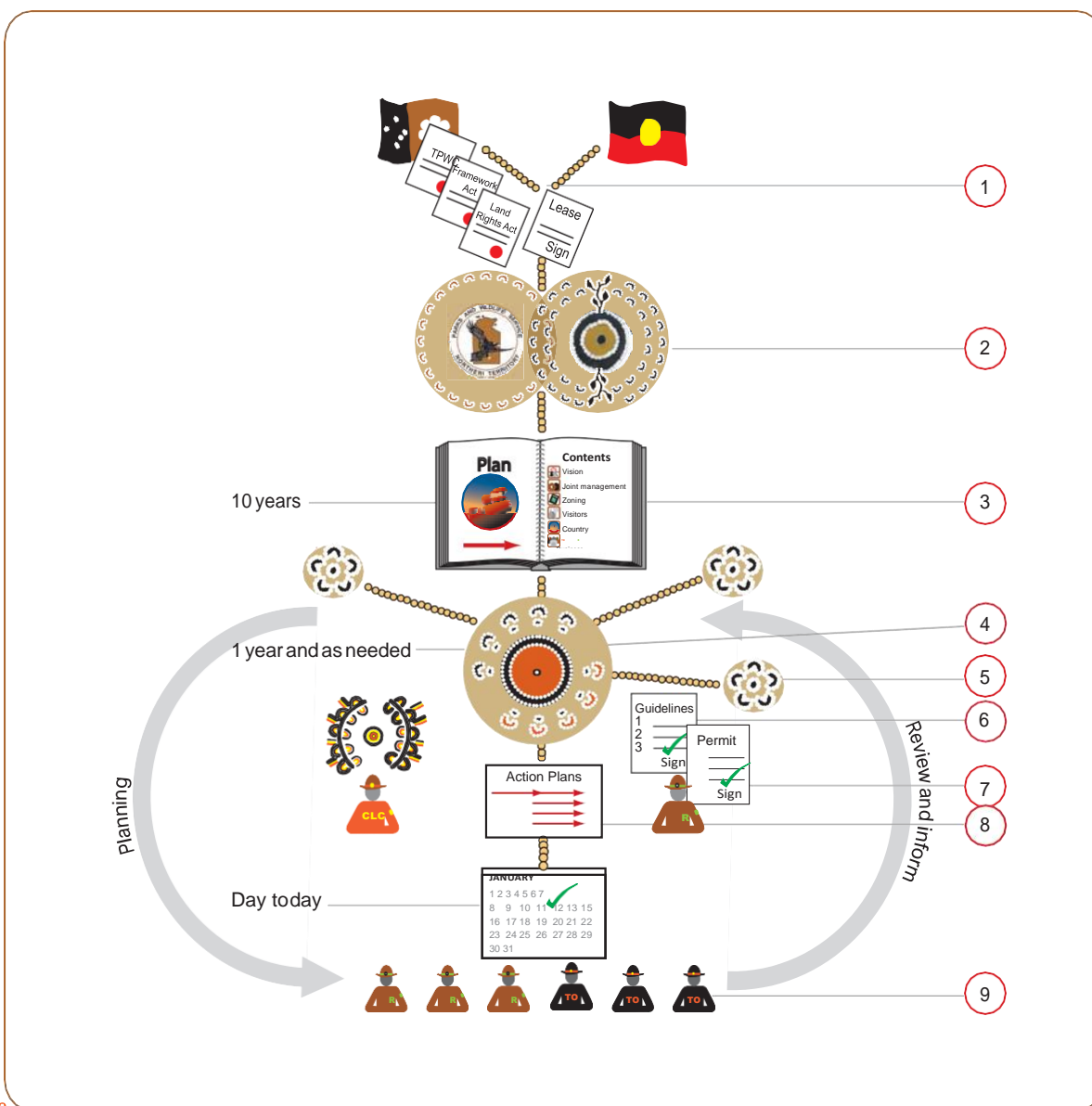
**2.13 Mining and Exploration** – The joint management partners will seek to re-declare a mining reserve (Reserve from Occupation) over the reserve.

**2.14 Sacred Sites Clearances** – The CLC will have sacred site clearance responsibility for all proposed works on the reserve. However the joint management partners may agree from time to time that a proponent may require an AAPA Authority Certificate under the NTASSA. Clearance may also be sought under the Heritage Conservation Act for works on places and objects protected under that legislation.

*'We are planning ... so the next generation can carry on ... by teaching and getting involved ... teaching our young people the right dance'. 'Too few young girls and young boys ... to come listen every time meeting ... they need to learn the words.'* **Kirda and Kurdungurlu**



Figure 4. Joint Management, Decision Making and the Plan

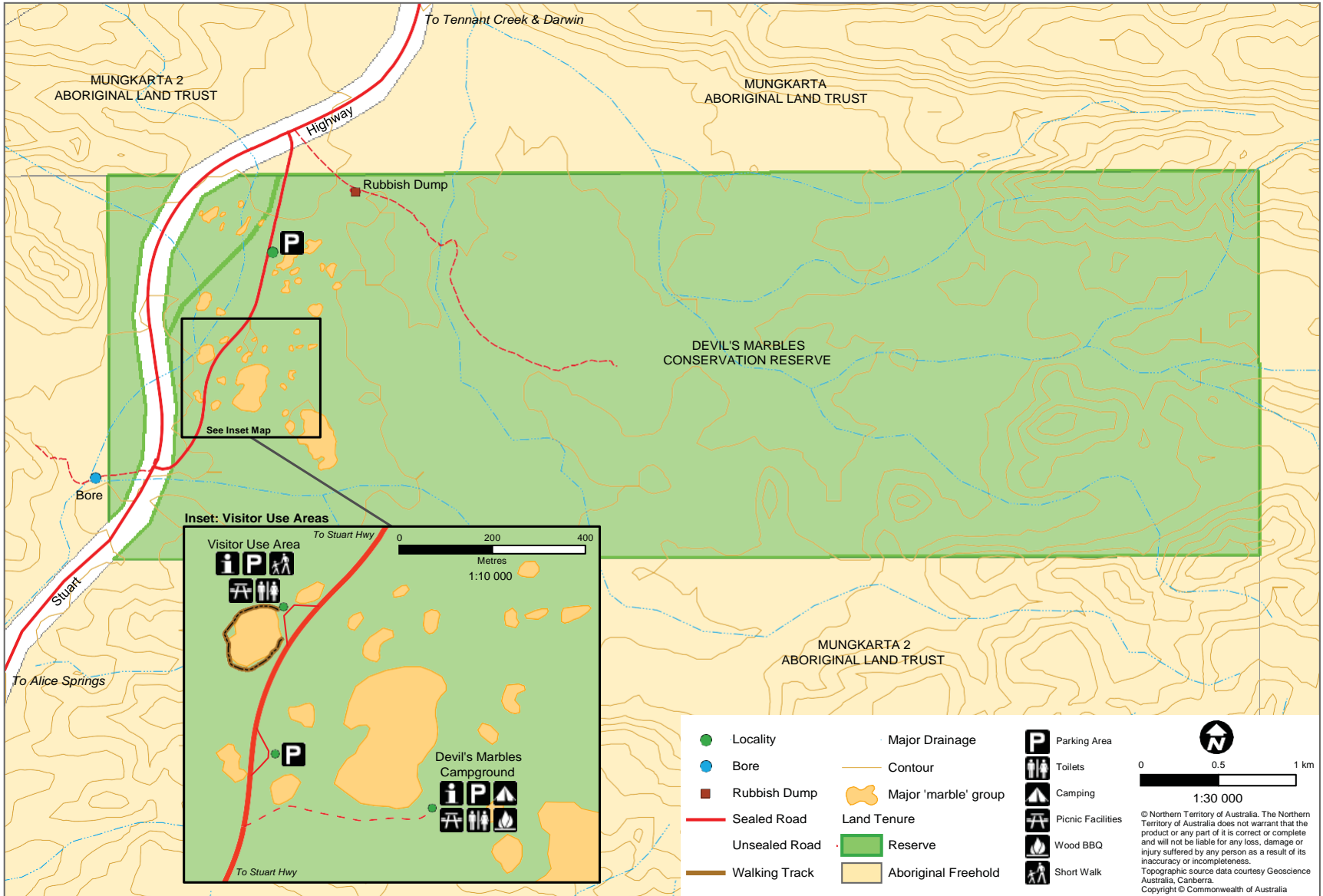


1. **The Laws** - Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act, Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act, Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act, Heritage Conservation Act, the Lease Agreement and traditional Aboriginal Law.
2. **Joint Management Partners** - Parks and Wildlife Service and Traditional Owners.
3. **Joint Management Plan** - Provides agreed direction for the management of the reserve.
4. **Joint Management Committee** - The principal decision-making body for managing the Reserve consisting of Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife.
5. **Traditional Owner working groups** - may be formed to work on specific projects, policies or issues.

6. **Guidelines** - The Joint Management Committee set reserve specific guidelines for consistent ongoing management.
7. **Permits** - Parks and Wildlife assesses permits consistent with guidelines prepared by the Joint Management Committee.
8. **Action Plans** - The Joint Management Committee approves annual action plans and programs consistent with agreed long-term goals and sets priority tasks.
9. **Day-to-Day Work** - Traditional Owners and park rangers work together on agreed programs.

A graphical dictionary is presented in Appendix 4

Map 4: Reserve Map



## 3. Zoning

### Our Aim

- To protect the reserve's values while providing for public enjoyment and appreciation.

### Background

The *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* provides for Joint Management Plans to identify management zones in, and management regimes for the reserve. The zoning scheme below reflects:

- Current and future visitor uses and scenic values.
- Cultural values and the interests of Traditional Owners.
- Land use capability such as resistance to erosion.

It provides a guide for development and management by stating a purpose for each zone, appropriate activities, level of access and use, and appropriate facilities. In any zone, development will only proceed with appropriate protection of cultural and conservation values. Management issues are considered in further detail in subsequent sections of this plan. Three management zones are identified for the Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve, see Map 5.



Photo: Tourism NT

## Management Directions

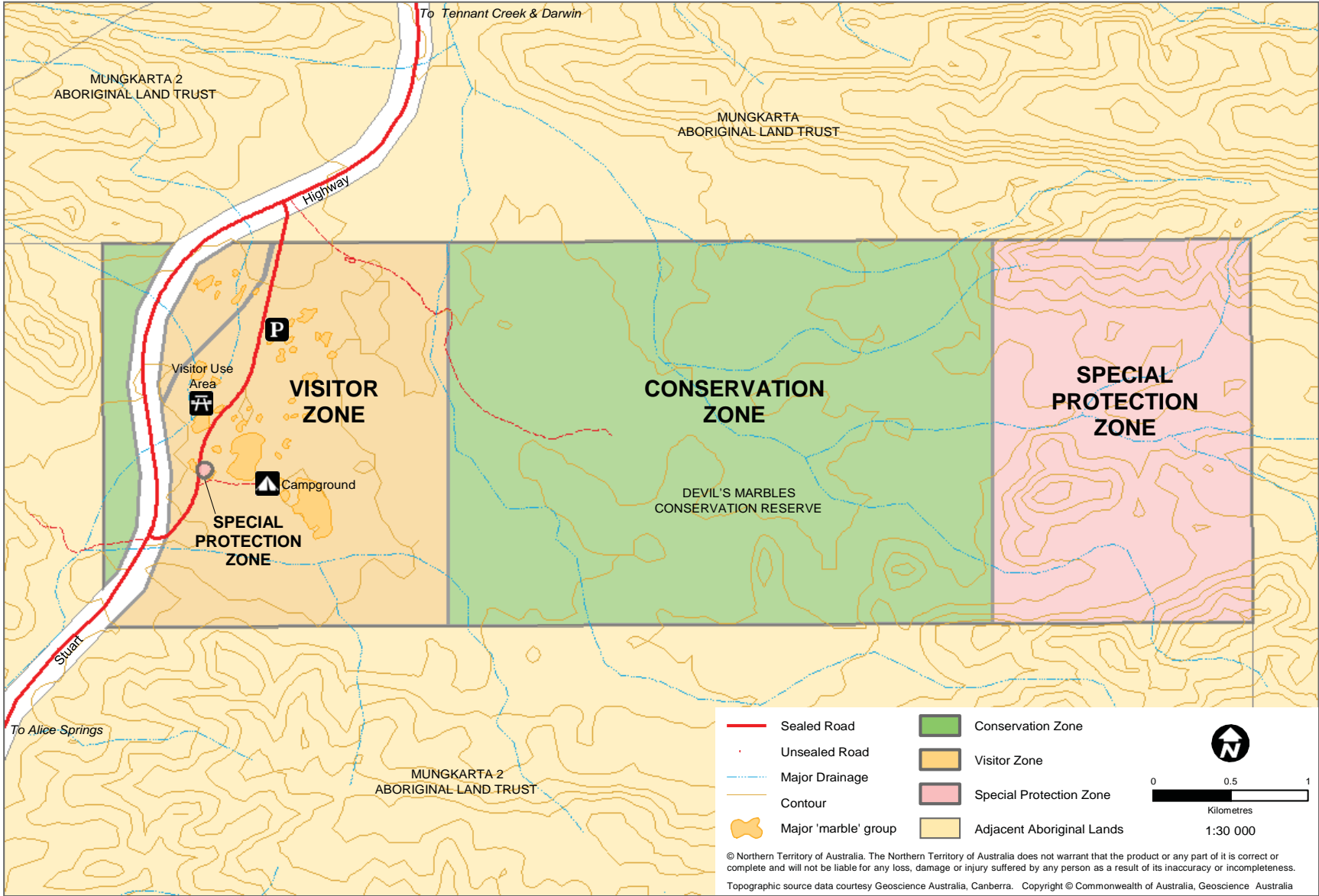
3.1 Zoning - Management of the reserve will conform to the following zoning scheme:

	Visitor Zone	Conservation Zone	Special Protection Zones
Primary Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision for concentrated visitor use while minimising negative impacts</li> <li>• Provision for future development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of natural and cultural values</li> <li>• Provision for controlled visitor use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of cultural values</li> <li>• Provision for agreed management activities</li> </ul>
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conventional vehicle access</li> <li>• Constructed walking tracks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public access by permit only or in connection with approved concession</li> <li>• Vehicle access restricted to proposed service track</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access consistent with restrictions directed by Traditional Owners</li> <li>• Management access for approved programs only</li> </ul>
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photography</li> <li>• Interpretation of the reserve's values.</li> <li>• Camping</li> <li>• Short walks</li> <li>• Low-key commercial tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management and cultural activities</li> <li>• Bushwalking under permit</li> <li>• Recreational and commercial activities under permit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management activities consistent with any restrictions directed by Traditional Owners</li> </ul>
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking, picnic and basic camping facilities</li> <li>• Toilets and viewing platforms</li> <li>• Shade shelters, visitor information and interpretive walks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management facilities necessary to protect key values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management facilities necessary to protect key values</li> </ul>

3.2 **Visitor Impacts** – Public access within any zone will be monitored and may be restricted if it is shown to be having a detrimental effect on the reserve's values.

3.3 **Special Protection Zone** – Public access to the Special Protection Zone in the far eastern portion of the reserve is restricted. Access will be granted to male employees of the Parks and Wildlife Service for approved management purposes only. Additional areas of the reserve may be added to the Special Protection Zone during the term of this plan as determined by the Joint Management Committee.

Map 5: Zoning Map







*The native figs (Ficus brachypoda) of Karlu Karlu (tywerrike in Kaytetye and Alyawarra, and witjiji in Warlpiri and Warumungu) are a key feature of the reserve and highly significant to Traditional Owners. Photo: Barritt & May*



## 4. Managing Visitors

### Introduction

This section looks at the ways in which visitors' interests and opportunities will be addressed while protecting the values of the reserve.

About 100,000 people visit the reserve each year. Tourism research continues to highlight a high demand for experience of Aboriginal culture among visitors to the Northern Territory. Research also suggests that for many visitors these expectations are not met.

Karlu Karlu is part of a living culture. Joint management of Karlu Karlu therefore represents an outstanding opportunity to enhance the experience of a large number of Northern Territory visitors from one of simple scenic appreciation to a rich cultural experience. This opportunity extends to visitors meeting Traditional Owners on their land and appreciating directly their spiritual connection to country. Traditional Owners also welcome opportunities to interpret their land to visitors from their perspective. While not all Traditional Owners want to engage in this way with visitors, joint management brings opportunities to support development of the authentic cultural tourism experiences that many visitors seek.

### Principles for Managing Visitors

The joint management partners of Karlu Karlu recognise:

- Visitors provide significant economic opportunities to the local and wider community through enterprise development, jobs and training opportunities.
- Visitors should have opportunities to learn about the reserve's cultural and natural values.
- Visitors' experience and appreciation of the reserve's values are enhanced by well-designed facilities and high-quality information and interpretation.
- Visitor safety is paramount.
- Visitor satisfaction, numbers and activities need to be monitored to guide management planning.
- Well managed commercial operations can assist visitor management by providing opportunities, services and facilities that park management cannot provide.



Photo: Tourism NT

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## **Visitor Activities, Access, and Facilities**

### ***Our Aims***

- To provide all visitors safe and convenient access to the main attraction of the reserve, presenting and protecting the marbles as part of a wider cultural landscape.
- To provide activities and facilities in the main visitor area that encourage visitors' appreciation of the reserve's cultural and natural values.

### ***Background***

#### *Visitor Activity*

The Devil's Marbles is a high visitation reserve. About 100,000 people visited in 2007. Surveys find that about 65 percent of visitors originate from interstate; 30 percent from overseas; and five percent from the Northern Territory. The Stuart Highway, one of the Northern Territory's most travelled roads, cuts through the reserve and all traffic is subject to impressive and enticing views of Karlu Karlu's giant granite boulders.

For most visitors the reserve is a convenient, scenic road-side stop, an opportunity to break from a long drive and photograph and explore the boulders of Karlu Karlu. The average visit is less than two hours, involving short explorations from the vehicle bays along the access road. A short interpretive walk at the main visitor site is popular with visitors. A network of informal walking tracks criss-cross the reserve. Camping is a significant and increasing activity. Surveys from 2006 report that some 18 percent of visitors during the peak seasons stayed overnight in the campground compared with nine percent in 1999.

The pattern of visitation is highly seasonal. The peak months continue from May through to August with the highest visitation during the Easter holiday break. Surveys report that what visitors value most about the reserve is its natural setting and low-key development.

A concession to sell visitors refreshments has operated in recent years during the tourist season. The Traditional Owners have expressed interest in establishing a facility by which they can have contact with visitors, interpret the landscape and their culture and gain commercial benefit.

#### *Access*

That part of the reserve now accessed by large numbers of visitors was, in the past, a place visited only by respected senior and knowledgeable people for important ceremonial purposes. With the passing of time, Traditional Owners have come to accept visitors exploring the granite boulders, but ask that visitors act responsibly and respect the area's cultural significance.

An older section of the Stuart Highway re-routed in 1987 provides sealed access north-south through the visitor area. Access to the campground is adjacent to the day use area via a short, unsealed road. All roads within the visitor area are suitable for conventional vehicles. The 50-69 age group is the largest age group visiting the Devil's Marbles during the peak season.

#### *Facilities*

The reserve's visitor facilities are low-key. They include a day use area consisting of three roadside rest areas with a short interpretive walk, tables, a sealed unit toilet, and one shade structure with interpretive information.

There is a short interpretive walking track in the main visitation area leading from the larger roadside rest area. However, many visitors welcome the opportunity to freely wander and explore the granite boulders in the general visitor area. Traditional Owners would like visitors to be directed away from some sites of higher cultural importance.

The campground is very basic, with space for about 20 cars and three coaches. It contains two shade structures, tables, three pit toilets and 13 wood barbeques. There are no designated coach, caravan or trailer camping sites. The enjoyment of independent campers is sometimes impacted by large group or coach campers, particularly during peak season. Separate camping areas for independent campers and coach tour groups may overcome this concern.

The campground is often full between early June and early August. Commercial overnight facilities are available south of the reserve at the Wauchope Hotel (7 km) and Wycliffe Well Roadhouse (24 km). Both offer camping and unit accommodation. At the closest roadside stop at Bonney Well 12 km north, water is available but toilets are not. At the reserve, overnight camping fees are consistent with Parks and Wildlife Service standards and are paid through an honesty system.

While it has been suggested that the low fees for vehicle-based campers provide undue competition with local commercial interests, a prohibition on camping in the reserve is likely to lead to illegal camping and increased use of free roadside stops along the Stuart Highway.

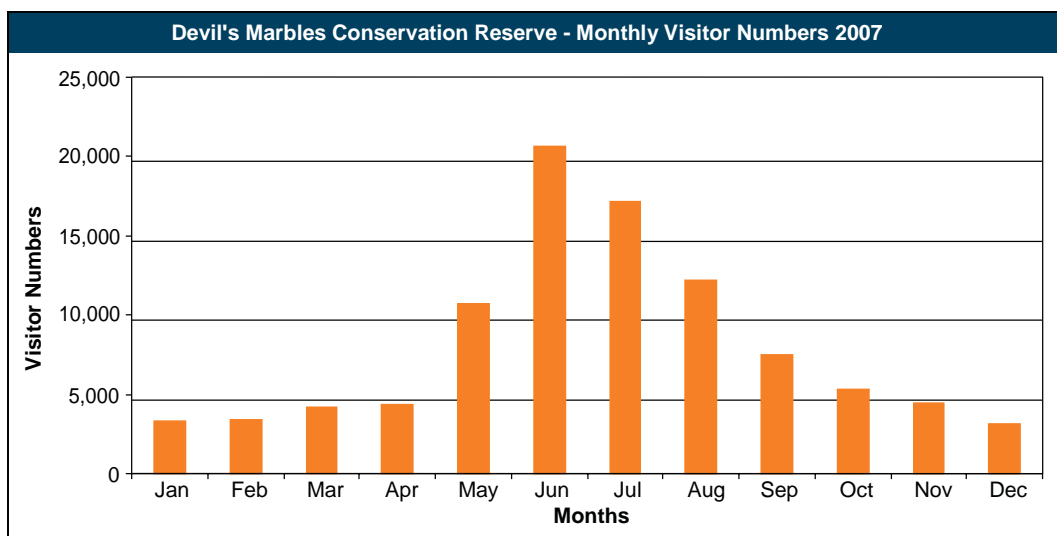
Congestion during the peak tourist season diminishes visitors' experience, puts pressure on facilities and exacerbates illegal roadside camping. Consideration should be given to upgrading, expanding or relocating the campground during the term of this plan. Alternatively, visitor experiences could be improved by relocating the campground away from the rock features.

Traditional Owners have expressed interest in providing a commercial camping area on nearby Aboriginal Land, and a centre which could include a base for small tourism enterprises and a contact point for Indigenous community-based rangers. Visitors have recommended improvements to the campground such as supplying drinking water, improved shade, better toilet facilities and enforced restrictions on generators. Drinking water is not provided due to the difficulty and expense of establishing and maintaining supply. Campground cleaning and rubbish removal is managed through a Parks and Wildlife Service contract, renewed every few years.

**Table 1. Visitors to the Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve.**

Visitor Numbers	1995	2001	2005	2007
Total	98,382	143,293	100,531	96,172

**Figure 5. Monthly Visitor Numbers 2007**



## ***Management Directions***

- 4.1 Visitor Access** – The old bitumen highway, the campground road and designated walking tracks will be maintained to a high standard for easy access for two wheel drive cars, towing vehicles and visitors that are aged and / or have mobility problems. For safety, environmental and cultural reasons, visitors' vehicle access will be restricted to existing roads.
- 4.2 Development Planning** – Facility development in the reserve will be approved by the Joint Management partners, and carefully planned with consideration to:
- The presentation and protection of the reserve's iconic scenery, the natural landscape and its cultural values.
  - The demands of high volume traffic, two wheel drive vehicles towing trailers and caravans, and older and less mobile visitors.
  - Opportunities to benefit Traditional Owners.
  - Minimising ongoing management and maintenance needs.
- 4.3 Campground** – The joint management partners will explore a range of options for the management and improvement of the campground. The Traditional Owners will be encouraged to take up commercial opportunities as campground hosts and managers. Consideration will be given to upgrading and outsourcing management of the existing area. Alternatively this facility may be closed and commercial camping offered on neighbouring Aboriginal land. Community stakeholders will be consulted.
- 4.4 Walking Tracks** – Consideration will be given to rationalising the network of informal walking tracks. Signs will direct visitors away from sensitive cultural sites within the main highly visited area. New walking trails for future guided tours to the central portion of the reserve may be considered by the joint management partners.
- 4.5 Cultural Centre** – The joint management partners will consider developing a facility with which Traditional Owners may engage with visitors, present their culture and gain commercially from interpreting the reserve to visitors. Options will be explored by the Traditional Owners with assistance from other agencies.
- 4.6 Generators and Firewood** – Generators will not be permitted and firewood will be collected outside the reserve. The provision of gas barbeques will be considered.

*'We are worried about tourists taking things ... we don't want them to take things ... it will make them sick. It is very spiritual and not to touch some things ... put up signs saying tourists not to take things ... before we go we need to bless the ground ... spray water ... need cultural meetings to teach them ... need Yapa (Aboriginal) and foreign languages ... need to bless the marbles.'* **Kirda and Kurdungurlu**

## Information, Interpretation and Education

### *Our Aims*

- To interpret and promote the reserve as a cultural landscape.

### *Background*

Information and interpretation plays an important role in visitor management by informing people about the values of the reserve and how visitors can respect them. Public education informs visitors about facilities, activities and relevant regulations and explains or interprets the reserve's natural and cultural features.

Visitors' experience is strongly influenced by the information provided and the way in which it is presented. The partners believe that visitors' experience of Karlu Karlu can be enhanced through interpretation that brings together its value as a recognisable icon of outback Australia together with its value as a landscape linked to an ancient, vibrant, living culture, a place owned by Aboriginal people and actively managed by them through a cooperative partnership.

The public image of Karlu Karlu is important to the joint management partners. They want to promote the significance of the reserve's values for future generations. Visitor information is provided on interpretive signs in shade structures, a lookout and signs on the interpretive walk. The reserve's fauna, flora, geomorphology, Aboriginal and historical values are current interpretive themes. During the tourist season rangers present camp fire talks to visitors on a weekly basis. These are often jointly presented with a Traditional Owner.

A significant number of people visit Karlu Karlu on commercial tours. Most stay for about two hours. Tourism research suggests that many visitors to the outback are "experience seekers", seeking high quality, educative interpretive material as one satisfier for their experience. There is strong interest among tourists in Aboriginal culture and a desire among many to have personal contact with Aboriginal people.

It is important that tour operators have a sound understanding of the reserve's cultural values and are able to pass on accurate and appropriate information to their clients. Traditional Owners have expressed a strong desire to correct misinformation given in the past, including incorrect Aboriginal mythology; for example, descriptions of the 'marbles' as the eggs of a rainbow serpent. To overcome these concerns, Traditional Owners want to be actively involved in interpretation planning and public education about local history and Aboriginal cultural values, including creation stories and cultural traditions. Traditional Owners also have an interest in commercial tour guiding. They believe this will ensure visitors have accurate cultural information about Karlu Karlu and a rewarding experience of the reserve.

### *Management Directions*

**4.7 Community Education and Interpretative Program** – Interpretation, information and community education programs will be well-planned, focussing on the value of the reserve as an icon of the outback and a cultural landscape. Interpretation programs will be approved by the Joint Management Committee. The joint management partners will ensure all cultural information shared with visitors is accurate and approved by the appropriate Traditional Owners.

- 
- 4.8 Aboriginal Enterprise** – Traditional Owners and local Aboriginal people will be encouraged to take up commercial tourism opportunities on the reserve including camp fire talks, cultural tours and other viable enterprises (refer to 6.5 - 6.10 inclusive). Support and training in tourism and interpretation will be facilitated by the Central Land Council.
- 4.9 Tour Operator Guidebook** – The joint management partners will prepare a guidebook to ensure that tour operators working in the reserve have access to accurate and appropriate information about Karlu Karlu's cultural values.
- 4.10 Signs** – Signs will be placed on the reserve stating that Karlu Karlu is Aboriginal land jointly managed by the partners.

*'Visitors don't know what is behind the rocks ... they can look and see what is front scenery ... but don't know what is behind.'*

*'Teach them (visitors) our way, our culture way ... some of them (visitors) interested in country'*

*'Right story not the wrong story ... only we can tell the right story.'*

*'We keep the hard ones ... we tell them only the easy ones ... Ayleparrarntenhe ... the dreamtime man'.*

*'We don't want some things shown in public'*

*'We want our culture stronger ... if we want to be strong we need to be strong as parents ... teaching ... education to be strong ... our young people keeping strong ... if they want to keep their country strong ... we teach culture'*

*'We've been taught by old people ... we learn together ... by teaching and learning together. All our kids today white fella school ... when finished we teach them our way'*

*'Young people don't listen ... need to put stories in English and language.'* **Kirda and Kurdungurlu**



## Visitor Safety

### *Our Aims*

- To manage the reserve for the safety of visitors.

### *Background*

Although Karlu Karlu is a relatively safe place for visitors, visitor activity on the reserve carries some risk of injury. The main safety concerns include:

- Falls when climbing the granite boulders.
- Vehicle accidents.
- Visitors becoming lost, injured or affected by heat.
- The chance of visitors being injured in a remote area.
- Wildfire.

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk, it can be reduced if visitors have good information, are prepared for hazards and behave appropriately.

For cultural and safety reasons the Traditional Owners would prefer visitors do not consume alcohol among the boulders.

Commercial tour operators bring many visitors to the reserve and are responsible for upholding high standards of safety in every aspect of their operations.

The effective management of emergency incidents requires a plan of action, adequate resources and trained, competent personnel.

### *Management Directions*

**4.11 Risk Assessment** – The reserve's facilities and visitor management practices will be subject to regular risk assessment. Risks identified will be rectified on a priority basis.

**4.12 Alcohol Use** – With respect to the wishes of Traditional Owners, signs will be placed asking visitors to confine consumption of alcohol to the campground.

**4.13 Emergency Preparedness** – The Parks and Wildlife Service Emergency Response Plan will be regularly reviewed, in collaboration with concessionaires and Police, Fire and Emergency Services. All rangers and concessionaire staff will be familiar with this plan. Incident reports will be submitted to meetings of the Joint Management Committee.



*Sand goanna (Varanus gouldii). Photo: Jason Barnetson.*

## 5. Managing Country

### Introduction

This section relates to the conservation of the reserve's cultural and natural resources. To the reserve's Traditional Owners, their culture, the land and its wildlife are fundamentally connected. They are keen to share their extensive knowledge of the land with the Parks and Wildlife Service and see it used in managing the reserve.

The Devil's Marbles is a relatively small area and represents only 0.03% of the Davenport-Murchison Bioregion. The Davenport Ranges National Park located in the same bioregion is a considerably larger reserve that is more important and more viable in terms of land and wildlife conservation. The Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve is surrounded by Aboriginal-owned land with similar title to that of the reserve. This presents an opportunity for the value of the reserve for wildlife conservation to be enhanced in the future through cooperative conservation programs extending beyond the reserve's boundaries. Proposals such as this may be considered by the partners during the life of this Plan.



Karlu Karlu Joint Management Planning for Country. Photo: Steve Nicholson.

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## **Principles for Managing Country**

The joint management partners of Karlu Karlu recognise:

- The reserve is part of an ancient and dynamic landscape and ecosystem.
- Natural systems and processes operating within it should be protected.
- Customary responsibilities and observances of Traditional Owners are important in managing landscape and ecology.
- Both indigenous ecological knowledge and scientific approaches are important for understanding the land.
- Unnatural soil erosion, introduced plants and animals, and visitor activity can threaten the values of the reserve.
- The management of sites of cultural significance and culturally related knowledge is primarily the responsibility of Traditional Owners.
- The use of the reserve for customary activities is very important to the Traditional Owners. It is important these are accommodated wherever possible.
- Fire has been used to manage the area since Wirnkarra or creation time. Careful fire management will help maintain the reserve's values.
- Traditional Owners will be recognised as the owners of cultural intellectual property and will control the use of cultural information.

## Scenic Character, Landscape, Geology, Soils and Water

### *Our Aim*

- To maintain the reserve's natural, scenic landscape.

### *Background*

For the general community, the character and appeal of the Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve lies with the spectacular landscape presented by the large rounded boulders. The reserve is located in a broad, shallow valley and protects several expanses of giant granite outcrops. The area is listed on the Register of the National Estate for its geological values. The boulders are particularly spectacular when the light of the morning and evening sun highlights their deep red colour.

There are two versions of the origin of the giant boulders. To Traditional Owners, Karlu Karlu and the surrounding landscape was created by the Arrange (Devil Man) who travelled through the area forming the rounded boulders.

To scientists, the boulders are the remnants of a solid mass of coarse-grained granite formed deep within the Earth's surface about 1640 million years ago, that has gradually eroded to form the rounded boulders.

The Devil's Marbles are unusual by virtue of their size, arrangement and shape. Many of the boulders are 11 or 12 metres high. Some lie in orderly arrangements while others are precariously perched on other boulders or rock platforms. Some stand in pairs. A few are dramatically split in two. In the past, deposits of red and yellow ochre were collected for ceremonial use. Wolframite (a tungsten-bearing mineral) was once mined within the area now reserved.

The boulders can be irreparably damaged by graffiti, as it is very difficult to remove graffiti without damaging the oxide surface of the boulders. Community awareness and prompt removal of graffiti by benign means are the key management methods. Following a program of remediation there was a dramatic decrease in graffiti in the mid 1990s and graffiti has since been only an occasional occurrence.

The soils of the reserve are predominately shallow granitic sands and gravels, the product of the eroded boulders. They form a slightly richer and more stable soil than is usual in the region. A series of low ranges contain the reserve within a single catchment. The gently undulating valley floor, which surrounds the giant boulders, is shallowly dissected by numerous intermittent stream channels which cross the reserve and drain slowly in a north westerly direction.

There are limited opportunities for groundwater supply and no permanent surface water. After periods of rain the reserve contains small waterholes along the creek beds. The channels, waterholes and soaks within the reserve remain in good condition.

### *Management Directions*

- 5.1 Scenery** – The natural character of the reserve will be protected. Any development will be carefully sited and designed to be in harmony with the natural environment, views and significant sites, so as not to detract from the reserve's landscape and scenic values.
- 5.2 Boulders** – Any work to repair unnatural disturbance to the boulders, such as graffiti will be subject to approval by the Traditional Owners to ensure cultural protocols are observed.



- 5.3 Soil, Gravel Extraction or Landscape Disturbance** – Soil or gravel may only be removed or disturbed with the approval of the joint management partners and in accordance with the conditions of a permit.
- 5.4 Soil Erosion** – Infrastructure and facilities will be sited to avoid areas susceptible to erosion and will be undertaken with a minimum of soil disturbance. All management activities will aim to minimise disturbance to the reserve's soils.
- 5.5 Sewage** – Any toilet systems installed in the reserve will be of a design that minimises risk of groundwater contamination.
- 5.6 Graffiti** – Community education and visitor interpretation will reinforce the significance of Karlu Karlu to encourage respect for the site. Graffiti will be removed as quickly as possible using methods that do not permanently damage the rocks.

*'what is lying on the ground ... don't touch ... not to touch' Kirda and Kurdungurlu*



Photo: Tourism NT



## Areas of Cultural Significance and Aboriginal Land Use

### *Our Aims*

- To ensure significant sites are protected.
- To ensure cultural obligations under customary law are not impeded.
- To improve access to areas of cultural significance for Traditional Owners.

### *Background*

#### *Areas of Cultural Significance*

What is nowadays the main visitor area was known by Traditional Owners as a dangerous place, visited only by senior Traditional Owners with special responsibilities. With the passing of time and the proximity of the Stuart Highway, Traditional Owners now accept visitor activity in this area. They say, "it's a little bit open now", but wish that visitors acknowledge the importance of the area and respect the site.

Large areas of the reserve have special cultural significance. According to Aboriginal law, Traditional Owners have responsibility to look after the country. This may include the performance of ceremonies and visits to important sites to ensure everything is in its right place. Cultural traditions require Kirda and Kurdungurlu to fulfil these responsibilities to 'look after the country'.

Most of the reserve is a registered sacred site under the *Northern Territory Sacred Sites Act*.

Sites represent only part of a broader picture of a complex landscape of spiritual significance.

While there are deeper levels of knowledge applying to these areas, cultural information that can be shared publicly provides some insight into the worldview of Traditional Owners and reinforces the importance of this country to them. Some sites pose spiritual danger to people, and custodians feel a heavy responsibility to ensure observance of rules that keep such forces in check. Visitors ignoring these concerns cause them alarm and distress.

The reserve contains rock carvings and archaeological materials that testify to a long history of use and occupation. These ancient cultural resources are highly significant to Traditional Owners and the wider community.

It is of paramount importance to Traditional Owners that the boulders of Karlu Karlu, other significant places, rock carvings and archaeological material within the reserve are protected. It is also critical that the appropriate Traditional Owners have control and management of these sites and resources. The Parks and Wildlife Service will do its best to accommodate Traditional Owners' aspirations to fulfil their cultural obligations under customary law.

Public knowledge promotes appreciation and respect for this aspect of the reserve and reduces the risk of unintentional damage to significant areas. However, secret and sacred cultural knowledge will not be available for public information. The Traditional Owners request that the public respects this fact.

### *Aboriginal Land Use*

Past traditional land use in the reserve involved hunting and gathering activities. In recent years, Traditional Owners have not accessed the reserve as it was seen as a reserve and a place where they were not allowed to go. With the return of land title and the beginning of joint management, the Traditional Owners would like to access the central area of the reserve so they can take their families out to pass on knowledge about culture and country. They also consider it very important to conduct ceremonial activities on the reserve. Access for this purpose remains difficult due to the rough terrain. It is unlikely that ceremonial activity will affect visitors.

Under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, Traditional Owners have the right to hunt wildlife and gather bush foods. Due to its size and the proximity of visitors, Traditional Owners believe that hunting is inappropriate within the reserve and choose not to exercise that right. They remain interested in gathering bush foods and medicines on the reserve from time to time.



*Local bush tucker, Bush Banana (Leichhardtia australis). Photo: Barritt and May.*

### **Management Directions**

- 5.7 Culturally Sensitive Areas** – The Parks and Wildlife Service will support Traditional Owners' wishes to restrict visitor access to culturally sensitive sites or areas on the reserve, as directed by them. Traditional Owners ask that a large native fig (*Ficus brachypoda*) in the visitor area is protected from all forms of visitor activity or disturbance and that this site is not filmed or photographed.
- 5.8 Cultural Business** – Traditional Owners' authority in respect to all cultural matters will be respected.
- 5.9 Ceremony** – Parts of the reserve may be temporarily closed from time to time to allow Traditional Owners to conduct ceremony. Sufficient notice will be given to the public if necessary.
- 5.10 Heritage Protection** – On the advice of Traditional Owners, significant areas, rock engravings and archaeological material will be recorded and afforded appropriate protection.
- 5.11 Community Education** – An understanding of, and respect for Karlu Karlu as a place of high cultural importance will be promoted to visitors by the joint management partners.
- 5.12 Staff Awareness** – If Parks and Wildlife Service staff are required to access culturally sensitive areas (refer Zoning 3.1 and 3.3), senior Traditional Owners may supervise access and will advise on appropriate behaviour.
- 5.13 Public Interpretation** – The Traditional Owners' public creation stories may be interpreted to visitors so they may gain an understanding and respect for the traditional cultures associated with Karlu Karlu.
- 5.14 Consultation** – All heritage protection measures, culturally related public interpretation or any developments proposed for Aboriginal sites will be subject to approval by the Traditional Owners. A formal site clearance by the CLC will be required for any proposed works.
- 5.15 Traditional Gathering** – Rights in relation to harvest of plant materials from the reserve for traditional purposes will extend only to Traditional Owners. Gathering of plant foods and materials by others will require the approval of the Joint Management Committee.
- 5.16 Management Access Track** – Subject to cost and available funds, a four-wheel drive management track will be established to access the central portion of the reserve for land management and cultural purposes.

*'The country here used for ceremony ... only the right people went there ... Kirda and Kurdungurlu.*

*'Old ladies would dig for yams in the back area ... important to go there now to get medicine and bush tucker ... white ochre ... still today we teach young boy and women' Kirda and Kurdungurlu*

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## Indigenous and Historical Knowledge

### *Our Aims*

- To ensure Traditional Owners retain control of their ecological knowledge and sites in relation to the reserve.
- To foster the transfer of indigenous and historical knowledge from old to young people in relation to the reserve.

### *Background*

Indigenous and historical knowledge encompasses Traditional Owners' ecological knowledge, oral histories of times before and after European settlement, and knowledge relating to the Dreamtime or creation stories. Traditional Owners are concerned about this knowledge being lost and it is vital to them that it is passed on to succeeding generations. They want their young people to learn about looking after country and the use and significance of plants and animals. They will require access to the reserve for this purpose. Traditional Owners also would like to share information with rangers they believe will help with park management, for example the traditional use of fire.

While Traditional Owners are protective of their traditional knowledge they are keen to share some knowledge with visitors through interpretive programs, particularly about bush tucker and medicines in the reserve. Historical events, such as the story about John Flynn's gravestone, may also be included in interpretive programs. This relates to the fact that a sacred boulder was taken from the area in 1953 to mark John Flynn's grave near Alice Springs and was returned to its original location in 1999.

### *Management Directions*

- 5.17 Inter-Generational Transfer** – Joint management programs will provide opportunities for Traditional Owners to foster the transfer of traditional knowledge between generations.
- 5.18 Oral Histories** – Where appropriate, oral histories will be recorded and included in interpretive programs.
- 5.19 Indigenous Ecological Knowledge** – Indigenous ecological knowledge will be documented by the joint management partners for the benefit of both local Aboriginal people and visitors.
- 5.20 Protecting Intellectual Property** – The intellectual property rights of Traditional Owners will be protected. The recording, storage and use of cultural information will be consistent with the directions of Traditional Owners through the Joint Management Committee and with policy established for this purpose.
- 5.21 Historical Remains** – The remnants of Tungsten mining, World War Two depots and the Overland Telegraph Line will not be disturbed by development or management activity without appropriate heritage clearance.

*'We would hunt in the flat away from the rocks ... only right people would go ... those old people ... sacred site you know'*

*Some places we need to look after ...that old man he knows everything...what all sites protected.*

*'Our histories they didn't learn in schools ... only when we go home ... old people would tell us by writing it on the ground.'*

*'We are worried about losing country and ceremony and all that ... young ones don't know ... we worried they don't know the stories ... after we go ... they're the ones to know ... we need to teach them'*

*'Sacred things and all that ... not for anyone else ... it's important ... keep the family knowledge in the circle ... in the family circle.'*

*'The story has to be there ... the ceremony things ... the business way ... we the ones that got to get them (young people) and teach them about our culture way'*

### ***Kirda and Kurdungurlu***



Dingoo. Photo: Jason Barneston



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## Native Plants and Animals

### Our Aims

- To maintain a natural landscape with a focus on protection of the scenic and cultural values of the visitor zone.
- To maintain indigenous ecological knowledge.

### Background

Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve lies within the Davenport-Murchison Bioregion, bordering the Tanami Bioregion and is situated between the subtropics and the arid zone. Approximately 2% of the Davenport-Murchison Bioregion is conserved within National Parks or Reserves. The Devil's Marbles only contributes to 0.03% of the total Bioregion and is home to a relatively small range of species typical of the area. In the context of the Northern Territory reserve system it makes a minor contribution to biodiversity conservation.

The small area of the Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve means that its conservation management in isolation is not viable over the longer term. If however the reserve was part of a much larger area managed for conservation, such as an Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) on adjacent Aboriginal lands, management for biodiversity conservation could be effective.

Approximately 116 plant species (including seven introduced species) have been observed within the reserve and no rare or endangered species have been recorded. The vegetation of the reserve can be broadly described as consisting of three plant communities:

- Spinifex rocky ridges and gravelly hill rises (*Triodia spicata*, *T. epactia*, *T. intermedia* (and possibly *T. pungens*) with a scattered overstorey of trees and shrubs; including snappy gums (*Eucalyptus leucophloia*), *Acacia* species and bloodwoods (*Corymbia odontocarpa*) which mainly lie within drainage lines.
- Mixed shrubs (*Acacia cuthbertsonii*, *A. adsurgens*) and spinifex (*Triodia bitextura*, *T. longiceps* and *T. pungens*) on open sandy flats and drainage depressions.
- Vegetation surrounding the granite boulders (marbles); poorly defined but influenced by soil differences and water drainage.

The reserve includes the home ranges of several widespread species whose conservation is unlikely to be affected by any direct management activity in the reserve. In summary, the recorded fauna of the reserve comprises:

- Eighty three bird species.
- Ten species of native mammal including two bats, one dasyurid, two macropods, two rodents and 1 canid (dingo).
- One monotreme (echidna).
- Thirty species of reptiles, including twenty seven species of lizard and three species of snake.
- Four frog species.
- One crustacean (drought-surviving crab *Holthuisiana transversa*).



The eastern portion of the reserve and the broader area continues to be a significant area to Traditional Owners for bush tucker and traditional medicine. They maintain traditional knowledge of the area including foods, medicines, fire, tobacco, tools, artefacts, adhesives, ornaments, ceremonial decorations and water sources. The native fig (*Ficus brachypoda*) found within Karlu Karlu—*tywerrke* in Kaytetye and Alyawarra, and *witjiji* in Warlpiri and Warumungu—is particularly significant to female Traditional Owners.

Traditional Owners are very concerned about the apparent reduction in some species and the absence of others that once inhabited the area. They are keen to be involved in any aspect of wildlife management on the reserve and have expressed a desire to get out on the reserve to share and pass on to young people knowledge of country.

Harvesting bush tucker and plant materials is a right enjoyed by Traditional Owners. There is considerable potential for bush tucker tours to be run on the reserve although concentrated collection may damage vegetation in some areas.

### ***Management Directions***

**5.22 Wildlife Survey and Monitoring** – Wildlife survey and monitoring will be a lower priority for the reserve in relation to conservation management. However, such activities are valuable opportunities for knowledge exchange between the partners and younger Traditional Owners and may be carried out from time to time for this purpose.

**5.23 Information Management** – New plant and animal records will be recorded in appropriate Parks and Wildlife Service biophysical datasets.

**5.24 Bush Tucker Tours** – Bush tucker tours or tourist activities that inform and educate tourists about traditional uses of plants will be encouraged. Native vegetation will not be damaged as a result of any such activity.

**5.25 Traditional Use of Resources** – Traditional Owners will harvest bush tucker and plants within the reserve for customary use. If necessary, the impact of harvest will be monitored and managed to lessen impact. For safety reasons, Traditional Owners will not hunt with firearms within the reserve.

**5.26 Firewood** – To protect the sparse vegetation of the reserve, firewood collection will be prohibited within the reserve.

*'Too much bush tucker names ... they want to know them animal name ... teach them kids ... teach them name ... same tree different name ... everything name. Old people ... young people can work together with rangers ... two-way he can learn.'*

*'Old people use to tend to these areas. Yapa (Aboriginal people) don't do that anymore and the animals have gone away. But if they see us (Traditional Owners) those animals will come back ... If we sing ... they will come (wildlife).'*

*'Kwarlp (Hare wallaby) gone, Wamper (Possum) gone, Atyelp (Quoll) gone. We have ceremony for these animals.'*

*'We know the stories for all those animals which are gone... those extinct ones ... they're still there we still have stories for those animals ... they're still alive ... somewhere.'*

*'Spend time there ... ceremonies ... some plants and animals will come back. If they see us they will come back.'*

*'It's OK for White-fellas to separate (biodiversity) but we don't separate.'*

### ***Kirda and Kurdungurlu***



*Drought surviving crab (Holthuisiana transversa). Photo: Central Land Council.*

## Introduced Plants and Animals

### Our Aims

- To maintain a natural landscape with a focus on protection of the scenic and cultural values of the visitor zone.

### Background

Weeds and feral animals pose a risk to the reserve's biodiversity and its scenic and cultural values. As discussed above, the value of the reserve for biodiversity conservation is relatively low. Although weeds and feral animals make an impact on the reserve's biodiversity values, efforts to manage them at the reserve scale would represent relatively poor investment of available resources. Weeds and feral animal management in the reserve should therefore focus on minimising their impacts on visitor (aesthetic) and cultural values within the visitor areas.

Weeds are mainly restricted to visitor areas and many parts of the reserve remain relatively weed free. Weeds of concern include buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*), red natal grass (*Melinis repens*) and feather top rhodes grass (*Chloris virgata*). Traditional Owners have expressed concerns about weeds and their effect on reducing the availability of some types of bush tucker, particularly yams, bush onions and bush tomato, and are keen to be more involved in vegetation management programs.

Four introduced vertebrate species are known to inhabit Karlu Karlu: the feral horse (*Equus caballus*), feral cattle (*Bos Taurus*), feral cat (*Felis catus*) and house mouse (*Mus domesticus*).

There is little evidence of impact from cattle and feral horses on the visitor area. The reserve will remain unfenced from neighbouring Aboriginal lands, which are owned and managed by Traditional Owners with responsibilities for Karlu Karlu.

### Management Directions

**5.27 Weed Management Program** – Weed control will focus on the visitor area. The program will be reviewed by the Joint Management Committee each year. Management will pay particular attention to:

- The impact of weeds on the reserve's aesthetic values.
- Regional priorities, cost/benefits and available resources.
- Practical weed control methods.
- Traditional Owners cultural concerns.
- Employment of Traditional Owners.
- Managing risks of weeds spreading through movement of soil.
- Synergies with other management programs.

**5.28 Feral Animal Management Program** – Feral animal management will focus on protecting the visitor area. Programs will be reviewed by the Joint Management Committee each year. Management will pay particular attention to:

- Regional priorities, cost/benefits and available resources.
- Practical and humane feral animal control methods.

- Traditional Owners cultural concerns.
- Employment of Traditional Owners.
- Visitor safety.
- Liaising with neighbours.
- Synergies with other management programs.

**5.29 Information Management** – Weed and feral animal observations and treatments will be recorded in Parks and Wildlife Service biophysical datasets.

**5.30 Pets** – Visitors may bring dogs into the car park area of the reserve. In all other circumstances, animals can only be brought into the reserve with an approved permit issued by the Parks and Wildlife Service.

*'We can see these animals ... these belong to this country ... but horse, donkey, camel ... (they're) strangers ... before camel and all these other animals come along there was plenty animals.'*

*This plant (Buffel grass) ... roots still there after burn ... it's a problem.'*

### ***Kirda and Kurdungurlu***



*The Devils Marbles. Photo: Jason Barnetson*

## Fire

### *Our Aims*

- To protect people, property and sacred sites from wildfire.
- To maintain a natural landscape with a focus on protection of the scenic and cultural values of the visitor zone.
- To incorporate indigenous ecological knowledge into fire management.

### *Background*

Fire has always been a part of Karlu Karlu's landscape and has shaped the area's ecology. Failure to manage the high risk of wildfire exposes people, physical assets, personal property and sacred sites to danger and damage.

Most of the reserve's vegetation and habitats have evolved with, and are relatively tolerant of frequent fire. Some vegetation growing around the large granite boulders, such as the native fig are however, both culturally valuable and sensitive to fire.

Fire has been managed on the reserve program for many years, focussing on firebreaks and fuel reduction around the main visitor area to protect infrastructure and reduce risk to visitors. Given the reserve's small size and relatively low biodiversity value, managing fire at a larger scale across the reserve is difficult to justify on the basis of conservation outcomes. Broad-scale efforts may be justified in collaboration with neighbouring landholders from time to time.

Since creation time, Traditional Owners have used fire as a tool in managing habitat, creating access through country, and for hunting and ceremonial purposes. By and large Aboriginal burning resulted in a patchwork of vegetation communities at different stages of recovery. Large wildfires were few and habitat diversity was promoted. Traditional Owners retain their traditional knowledge of fire and its use in the landscape. Both Kirda and Kurdungurlu are responsible for burning. Country was burnt just before the wet season to assist plant germination when rain fell and to clear areas for hunting. Pastoral land use and the movement of Aboriginal people to government settlements had a dramatic effect on the landscape leading to larger and more intense wildfires, more uniform regeneration stages and lower diversity of habitats.

Traditional Owners are keen to be involved in all aspects of fire management and have their interests and approaches incorporated into reserve management programs.

### *Management Directions*

**5.31 Fire Management Program** – Fire management will focus on the visitor zone with priority given to maintaining firebreaks and/or keeping fuel loads low to protect culturally significant trees, visitors and their property, park infrastructure and maintaining the reserve's natural aesthetics. From time to time consideration may be given to broader scale prescribed burning and fire control subject to resource availability and well-justified scientifically and culturally-based outcomes in collaboration with surrounding landholders. The Joint Management Committee will review programs each year. Management will pay particular attention to:

- Regional priorities, cost/benefits and available resources.
- Maintaining boundary firebreaks and reducing fuel loads around park infrastructure.
- Traditional Owners' cultural interests.



- Employing Traditional Owners.
- Visitor safety.
- Liaising with neighbours.
- Synergies with other management programs.

**5.32 Information Management** – When such data may be useful for fire management planning purposes, fires will be recorded in appropriate Parks and Wildlife Service biophysical datasets.

**5.33 Wildfire Suppression** – Wildfires threatening the reserve will be reported to the Bushfires Council and will be suppressed where visitor and asset protection are threatened.

**5.34 Camp Fires** – Visitors will be permitted to have fires only in fireplaces provided.

*‘Protect them dreamtime tree from bushfires ... old people would tell us not to touch those trees’*

*‘When we burnt ... all through the season ... old people burnt in patches ... only at the right time to burn ... not when strong winds ... might be big time dreamtime tree that side’.*

*‘Early days ... clean ‘em round (the trees) ... so fire doesn’t jump over ... especially protect them areas ... only burn small patches or all get burnt. So can come back new grass ... and come back again’*

*‘We burn ... when big rain comes ... so get big bush tucker. So burn just before the rain, when everything dry ... so when rains come plenty bush tucker, wild bananas ... little seeds ... tucker ... grass. Not a big wind time ... summer time best time ... December.’*

*‘Old people can teach them how to burn ... young people and CDEP ... and make sure we protect them dreamtime trees ... and teach rangers how to burn.’*

***Kirda and Kurdungurlu***



## 6. Managing Business

### Introduction

This section addresses the business of managing operational resources—including staff, funding and facilities—to support the implementation of actions identified in this plan. Other important management activities include the administration of permits and commercial operations, and stakeholder engagement.

Traditional Owners have so far gained little benefit from tourism or other commercial enterprise associated with the reserve. They see joint management as an opportunity to participate in management, commercial tourism and park service provision. They recognise that long-term institutional support and capacity building will be needed for these goals to be achieved. Bridging the gap between their aspirations and their capacity will require training, employment and enterprise development, all of which are addressed in this section. This section also addresses the need to assess management effectiveness and continuously improve the knowledge base that supports management decision-making. Administration of research, survey and monitoring activity is also addressed in this section.



*Prescribed burning in the Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve. Photo: Jason Barnettson.*

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## **Management, Resources and Operations for Joint Management**

### ***Aim***

- To ensure the directions of this plan are achieved with adequate resources used efficiently.

### ***Background***

At the time of this plan's preparation, the Devil's Marbles Conservation Reserve is managed as part of the Parks and Wildlife Service Barkly district operations, based in Tennant Creek. Rangers are not resident on or near the reserve. In addition to this reserve, Barkly district operations support the Davenport Ranges National Park, Tennant Creek Telegraph Station, Barrow Creek Telegraph Station and Connell's Lagoon Recreation Reserve. Resources for managing the reserve—including staff, funds and capital resources such as vehicles and fire-fighting equipment—are shared with these parks and reserves. Practically all funding to manage or develop this and every other reserve managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service is provided by the Northern Territory Government. How much funding is allocated to individual parks and reserves depends on the overall budget granted to the Service and priorities identified across all parks and reserves managed by the Service.

The Parks and Wildlife Service maintain a professional ranger work force. Staff will continue to participate in performance appraisal and career guidance programs as a means to monitoring staff satisfaction and identifying and meeting individual staff training needs. In addition, staff satisfaction and occupational health and safety will remain a key management concern.

The Barkly District currently has three permanent staff positions including an Aboriginal ranger recently graduated from a ranger traineeship.

The Devil's Marbles is visited by rangers at least weekly during the cooler months when visitor activity is highest, and less frequently at other times. Operational capacity is also enhanced through contracted services that currently include campground maintenance.

### ***Management Directions***

**6.1 Management Programs and Annual Action Plans** – The joint management partners will plan and review management programs and annual action plans for the reserve through annual meetings of the Joint Management Committee. Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service will jointly implement management programs and annual action plans. Operational management will pay particular regard to:

- The vision, purpose, principles, key values, aims and directions of this Joint Management Plan.
- The partners' roles and responsibilities.
- Regional priorities, available resources and cost-benefit analysis of proposals.
- Shared-decision making and Traditional Owner participation in on-ground programs.
- Listening and responding to Traditional Owners concerns.
- Linking management programs.
- Encouraging and supporting local business.

- 6.2 Day-to-Day Management** – The Parks and Wildlife Service will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the reserve under the direction of the Joint Management Committee.
- 6.3 Financing** – The Parks and Wildlife Service will finance and resource the reserve's ongoing management including administrative functions, staff, infrastructure and services. External funds may be sought to address specific projects, in particular culturally-focussed projects that are primarily of Traditional Owners' interest.
- 6.4 Professional Development** – Professional standards and staff competencies will be supported by ongoing training in all aspects of park management with special emphasis on cross-cultural training and joint management governance.

*'Need to get more young people to meetings, especially when we talk about work ... participate you know ... they need to come' Kirda and Kurdungurla*



*'Not Just Talking' Rangers, Traditional Owners and Central Land Council working together at the Devil's Marbles.  
Photo: Jason Barnetson*

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## **Indigenous Training, Employment and Enterprise Development**

### ***Our Aims***

- To provide casual and flexible work experience and training opportunities for Aboriginal people in management programs on the reserve.
- To support the uptake of concessions and contracts by local Aboriginal organisations.
- To encourage Aboriginal tourism enterprises using the reserve.
- To support full-time employment of Traditional Owners in the Parks and Wildlife Service.

### ***Background***

#### ***Training and Employment***

Joint management of Karlu Karlu will promote opportunities for employment and business for Traditional Owners. 'Benefiting both the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve and the wider community', is a legislated objective of joint management.

The Traditional Owners of Karlu Karlu want employment for their families. They look forward to new opportunities, especially for their young people, and see joint management as a way for them to develop their skills and confidence to enter the work force.

The Parks and Wildlife Service currently have three permanent ranger positions for Barkly district operations which include management of Karlu Karlu. One of these positions is occupied by an Aboriginal ranger traineeship graduate. The Parks and Wildlife Service intend to increase recruitment and retention of Aboriginal people in the agency and to deliberately foster Aboriginal employees' career progression. While the number of full-time ranger positions in the organisation is relatively small, interested and committed local Aboriginal people will be actively encouraged to apply when positions become vacant and will be supported in preparing their applications.

Aboriginal ranger traineeships will continue as a means to increase opportunities for local people to become rangers. In addition, Indigenous community-based ranger groups, volunteers and interest groups can all offer valuable services to support reserve management programs. The Parks and Wildlife Service will continue to offer flexible or periodic casual employment to Traditional Owners, their families and local Aboriginal people. Flexible employment provides work experience and skills exchange, builds positive working relationships between rangers and Traditional Owners and can pave the way for employment of Aboriginal people in permanent ranger positions.

#### ***Enterprise Development***

The lease agreement provides for preference to be given to local Aboriginal people and businesses for contract work. Managing Karlu Karlu remotely from Tennant Creek is costly. Joint management presents opportunities to create new management efficiencies that at the same time contribute to local economies. In time, it is hoped that a significant amount of work relating to the reserve's management, visitor services in particular, can be partially or fully contracted to Aboriginal businesses.

Karlu Karlu receives approximately 100,000 visitors each year and has significant potential for tourism. During planning discussions, Traditional Owners identified several enterprise ideas including: campground accommodation on adjacent Aboriginal lands; a facility to sell artefacts; crafts and art; guided cultural walks and tours; and a venue for traditional dance performance.

The joint management partners recognise the need for business advice, support and capital to start and sustain viable businesses. Efforts will be made to access other agency support and industry partners to help develop Aboriginal enterprises.

### ***Management Directions***

- 6.5 Training, Employment and Enterprise Development** – Training, employment and business outcomes for Traditional Owners will be actively pursued. Opportunities for direct and flexible employment, contracts and enterprise development will be reviewed annually, together with Traditional Owners' interests and capacity. Agreed, achievable plans will be determined. Where the Parks and Wildlife Service cannot directly assist, it will work with other agencies to see that training and business development opportunities are acted upon.
- 6.6 Paid Participation** – Opportunities for paid participation of Traditional Owners in park management programs will be maximised. This may include on-the-job and accredited training activities carried out by training organisations.
- 6.7 Contract Services** – Contract services relating to the reserve will be procured with respect to NT government processes and principles. Traditional Owners and Aboriginal organisations they support will be preferred contract service providers. Preference will also be given to other contractors providing training and employment to local Aboriginal people.
- 6.8 Cultural Advice** – Traditional Owners will be paid for specialist cultural advice and supervision when required.
- 6.9 Indigenous Employment Opportunities in the Parks and Wildlife Service** – The Parks and Wildlife Service will continue to provide opportunities for direct employment and training for Aboriginal people. Where appropriate aptitude and competency is demonstrated, preference will be given to people with local affiliations.
- 6.10 Community-Based Indigenous Rangers and Special Interest Groups** – Local Indigenous community-based rangers, community volunteers, and sponsored training and employment programs will be encouraged and, where possible, invited to assist with reserve management.
- 6.11 Other Aboriginal Rangers Working on the Reserve** – Aboriginal rangers from other areas will be introduced to the Joint Management Committee or a delegated Traditional Owner advisory group before working at Karlu Karlu.

*'Increase training in young people ... we want to arrange things for our young people but they don't get the opportunity ... we need to go back there on the country'*

*'Involvement ... young people and family being involved'*

*'Looking towards the future, working together for enterprise development.'*

*'All the country, our country, but none of the money. That's wrong.'*

***Kirda and Kurdungurlu***

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## Permits and Commercial Activity

### ***Our Aim***

- To encourage community economic benefit from the reserve.
- To ensure specially permitted events and activities do not compromise the reserve's key values.

### ***Background***

Commercial operations have an important role in visitor enjoyment and reserve management. Commercial activities carried out in the reserve to date include: tour operations, commercial filming, cleaning and maintenance contracts and sales. Commercial activities on Northern Territory Parks and reserves require a permit under By-law 13 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws*. Permits ensure that safety standards are adhered to, and preserve the values of the reserve.

By-law 13 also provides for concession operations. These are commercial activities involving special access or use of the reserve. Operational agreements set out the rights and obligations of the concessionaire. Additionally, where a secure form of land tenure is needed for the occupation or specific use of an area, a licence or sub-lease may be issued. Any licence or sub-lease must be consistent with the provisions set under the Lease Agreement between Traditional Owners and the Northern Territory Government and the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*.

Joint management agreements provide for preference to be given to local Aboriginal people and businesses. In granting permits to operate concessions, preference will also be given to local Aboriginal operations and businesses that offer employment and training opportunities to Traditional Owners. Traditional Owners have a number of business development ideas they would like to pursue, including cultural tours and sales of refreshments, arts and crafts.

Tour operators have a strong influence on visitors' experience of the reserve. Approximately 20% of all visitors experience the reserve with tour operators. Tour companies visiting any Northern Territory park or reserve require a permit under the Tour Operator Permit System, introduced in April 2006. The Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service want information given by tour operators to be accurate and appropriate. The Tour Operator Permit System provides a means for the joint management partners to better liaise with tour operators, and to monitor the activities and impacts of tour groups.

### ***Management Directions***

**6.12 Routine Commercial Tours** – Permits for tour businesses making normal use of the reserve will continue to be issued through the Tour Operator Permit System. Information from this system will be used for the better management of the reserve, including improved communication with operators.

**6.13 Permit Guidelines and Procedures** – As a priority, the joint management partners will establish guidelines and procedures by which proposals requiring permits under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws* will be considered.

Pending development of agreed guidelines and procedures the Central Land Council will consult with Traditional Owners in relation to permit applications that request any access or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors to the reserve.



Guidelines agreed by the partners will:

- Consider the interests of Traditional Owners, the community, the tourism industry and existing Parks and Wildlife Service policy.
- Include requirements to minimise impact on the reserve's values.
- Explicitly state when proposed activity will, and will not require consultation with Traditional Owners.

Approval procedures agreed by the partners will provide for:

- Timely processing of permit applications.
- Parks and Wildlife Service approving permit applications without consulting Traditional Owners when the proposal is clearly consistent with guidelines agreed by the partners.
- PWS refusing permits applications without consulting Traditional Owners when the proposal is clearly inconsistent with guidelines agreed by the partners.
- Consideration of permit applications by the full Traditional Owner group, the Joint Management Committee or a Traditional Owner advisory group, depending on the impact of the proposal when the proposal involves access or activity that would not ordinarily be allowed to visitors on the reserve or when proposal is a part of a major commercial project (for example, a concert).

The Joint Management Committee may revise permit approval guidelines and procedures as appropriate.

- 6.14 Concession Permits** – Concession permits will be issued by the Parks and Wildlife Service with the approval of the Joint Management Committee.



*Black Kite (Milvus migrans) circles during a prescribed burn. Photo: Jason Barnetson.*

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## Reserve Promotion, Commercial Film and Photography

### ***Our Aim***

- To ensure that public messages and images of the reserve are accurate, appropriate and consistent with the values of the reserve.

### ***Background***

Promoting the reserve plays an important role in protecting Karlu Karlu. Images of the Devil's Marbles feature in film, advertising, books and calendars as symbols of Australia's outback, the Northern Territory and the Barkly region. These representations contribute to the Barkly region's tourism profile, help build visitor expectations and help maintain public support for the reserve's management.

The joint management partners want to promote the reserve to tourists and to the wider community. However, information and images distributed to visitors is occasionally inaccurate or inappropriate. Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service want commercial use of information and images to accurately reflect the reserve's values. Some sites on the reserve are culturally significant and Traditional Owners do not want images taken of them.

Commercial filming and photography requires permits to be issued in accordance with the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws*. Parks and Wildlife Service policy and procedures relating to commercial filming and photography provide for individual parks and reserves to have supplementary commercial filming and photography policies, guidelines and fee schedules.

### ***Management Directions***

**6.15 Permit Guidelines and Procedures** – As a priority, the joint management partners will establish commercial film and photography guidelines and procedures by which proposals requiring permits under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws* will be considered.

Pending development of agreed guidelines and procedures the Central Land Council will consult with Traditional Owners in relation to permit applications that request any access, image or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors to the reserve.

The Joint Management Committee may revise permit approval guidelines and procedures as appropriate.

Guidelines agreed by the partners will:

- Consider the interests of Traditional Owners, the community, the tourism industry and existing Parks and Wildlife Service policy.
- Include requirements to minimise impact on the reserve's values.
- Explicitly state when proposed filming or photography will, and will not require consultation with Traditional Owners.
- Require that permit applications must state the intended use of the images and images may only be used for the purposes stated on the permit.
- Provide for Traditional Owners to supervise or participate in filming or photography activities and be paid appropriately.
- Provide for fees as appropriate.

Approval procedures agreed by the partners will provide for:

- Timely processing of permit applications.
- Parks and Wildlife Service approving permit applications without consulting Traditional Owners when the proposal is clearly consistent with guidelines agreed by the partners.
- Parks and Wildlife Service refusing permits applications without consulting Traditional Owners when the proposal is clearly inconsistent with guidelines agreed.
- Consideration of permit applications by the full Traditional Owner group, the Joint Management Committee or a Traditional Owner advisory group depending on the impact of the proposal, particularly when the proposal involves special access, images or activity, when the expected audience for the product is very large or proposed filming or photography represents a major commercial project, such as a feature film.

**6.16 Notification** – The Parks and Wildlife Service will inform the CLC of every permit application. The Traditional Owners will be notified by the CLC when promotional activities, commercial filming or photography permits are granted.

**6.17 News and Current Affairs** – Capture of images of the reserve for news and current affairs reporting will not require a commercial filming and photography permit.

**6.18 Promotion** - The joint management partners will continue to work with the regional tourism association and Tourism NT to ensure that pre-visit information and promotion of the reserve is accurate, reinforces the reserve's values and presents Karlu Karlu in ways that are acceptable to Traditional Owners.



Photo: Tourism NT

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## Relations with Stakeholders

### *Our Aim*

- To foster a supportive regional community and productive relations with others who have an interest in the reserve's management.

### *Background*

The reserve is a public asset and the partners are jointly accountable to the community. It is appropriate that others with interests in the reserve's management have a role in decision-making.

The small size of the reserve reinforces the importance of working closely with neighbours and other stakeholders. Karlu Karlu lies within the Mungkarta Aboriginal Land Trust, which has outstations at Wakurlpu, Junkaji and Mungkarta. From time to time the reserve will benefit from including Traditional Owners of neighbouring lands in land management decisions. Where efforts will meet the interests of both Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service, joint management may facilitate management of cross-boundary issues.

The joint management partners will be proactive in liaising with the tourism industry. The Parks and Wildlife Service will represent the partners' interests through established forums and organisations such as the Barkly Tourism Association and Tourism NT, particularly on matters surrounding the development and promotion of tourism opportunities. Wauchope Hotel and Wycliffe Well Roadhouse are recognised as important neighbours with an interest in tourism and enterprise development opportunities.

The wider community and conservation groups such as the Threatened Species Network and Greening Australia have interests in the reserve's wildlife. From time to time, other government agencies may have reason to access the reserve, seek information or give management advice.

### *Management Directions*

- 6.19 Local Community Education** – Where possible the reserve's community education and interpretation program will include local Aboriginal people, particularly young people.
- 6.20 Community Involvement** – Any community involvement initiatives that assist in achieving this plan's aims will be actively supported. The joint management partners will keep the community and stakeholders informed about significant issues and proposed developments.
- 6.21 Tourism Liaison** – The joint management partners will be proactive in liaising with the tourism industry through established forums and organisations such as the regional tourism association, Tourism Central Australia.
- 6.22 Land Management Liaison** – Traditional Owner representatives of the Joint Management Committee and Central Land Council will liaise with Traditional Owners of neighbouring lands on matters of mutual interest.

## Research, Survey and Monitoring

### *Our Aim*

- To encourage research, survey and monitoring activities which benefit the reserve and its management.

### *Background*

Effective management is very much about review and continuous improvement. Good management planning and operational decisions need good information about the reserve's values, visitor use, environmental trends and the effectiveness of management actions.

Most research, survey and monitoring programs are carried out as internal projects by the Parks and Wildlife Service. Research or surveys undertaken by external organisations require permits issued under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws*.

Traditional Owners may have knowledge of the reserve that can contribute to research outcomes. It is important that they be consulted and invited to participate in research, survey and monitoring projects and, where possible, employed in related work. Research and survey projects must protect the intellectual property rights of Traditional Owners.

Data on visitor numbers, demographics, activities and satisfaction is useful to guide many aspects of visitor management, including planning and design of facilities and interpretation programs. Traffic counters have been maintained at the reserve for many years. Visitor surveys have been conducted from time to time.

Joint management agreements require joint management to be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation. A partnership program with the Charles Darwin University is expected to identify indicators and processes for gauging successful joint management as a means to continuous improvement. It is expected this program will be implemented early in the life of this Plan.

Joint management success will be measured against achievement of the aims in this plan and the satisfaction of the joint management partners. Selected performance indicators will provide an additional guide to managers in monitoring management performance.

### *Management Directions*

**6.23 Internal Research, Survey and Monitoring** – Programs will be described in operational plans and be subject to annual review by the joint management partners.

**6.24 External Research** - External research will be encouraged where resulting knowledge is expected to contribute to improved management of the Territory's natural and cultural values, in particular the values of Karlu Karlu.

**6.25 Permit Guidelines and Procedures** – As a priority, the joint management partners will establish guidelines and procedures by which proposals for external research requiring permits under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws* will be considered.

Pending development of agreed guidelines and procedures the Central Land Council will consult with Traditional Owners in relation to permit applications that request any access or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors to the reserve.

The Joint Management Committee may revise permit approval guidelines and procedures as appropriate.



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Guidelines agreed by the partners will include the following:

- Consideration of the interests of Traditional Owners, the community, the tourism industry and Parks and Wildlife Service policy.
- Requirements to minimise impact on the reserve's values.
- Explicitly state when proposed research will, and will not require consultation with Traditional Owners.
- Protection of cultural and intellectual property rights (in accordance with agreed policy).
- Requirement for permit applications to state the intended uses of research outcomes and benefit sharing arrangements (if any) with the joint management partners.
- Provision for Traditional Owners to supervise or participate in proposed activities, for their knowledge to be incorporated into project objectives and outcomes where appropriate and for them to be paid when appropriate.
- A fee structure.
- Provision for reports on research outcomes to be given to the PWS and the CLC in hard copy and electronic copy, including plain English summaries.
- Provision for the CLC to review study reports prior to publication where protection of intellectual property may be concerned in relation to cultural information.

Approval procedures agreed by the partners will provide for:

- Timely processing of permit applications.
- Parks and Wildlife Service approving permit applications without consulting Traditional Owners when the proposal is clearly consistent with guidelines agreed by the partners.
- Parks and Wildlife Service refusing permits applications without consulting Traditional Owners when the proposal is clearly inconsistent with guidelines agreed by the partners.
- Consideration of permit applications by the full Traditional Owner group, the Joint Management Committee or a Traditional Owner advisory group depending on the impact of proposed research activities.

**6.26 Performance Monitoring** – A joint management monitoring and evaluation program will be developed and implemented as a high priority. See Management Direction 2.7

**6.27 Visitor Monitoring** – Visitor numbers will be continuously counted through well-maintained traffic counters and/or other means. Surveys to obtain other visitor data on will be conducted in accordance with the Parks and Wildlife Service visitor monitoring program and results used by the Joint Management Committee for planning and decision-making.

**6.28 Traditional Owner Participation** – Participation by Traditional Owners and employment in research, survey and monitoring projects will be maximised. Aboriginal knowledge will be incorporated in project objectives and outcomes where appropriate.



# 7. Appendices

## Appendix 1. Selected Performance Indicators

These performance indicators are an additional tool to assist the joint management partners to measure the success of management. They are not the only measures of success and further measures will be developed over time. There is a reasonable expectation that they will be achieved, if not year by year, then over the longer term of this plan. When indicators are not achieved, the reasons will be established and steps taken to improve outcomes.

General Objectives	Performance Measures	Means
<b>2. How Joint Management Will Work</b>		
A strong partnership is maintained that shares and makes good decisions.	Satisfaction of the partners (high).	Partner satisfaction monitoring (Refer 6.29).
	Participation and level of involvement by Traditional Owners (commensurate with capacity and desire to participate).	Ongoing record-keeping and annual review.
	Achievement of Aims and Management Directions in this plan (progressing).	Annual reviews.
<b>4. Managing Visitors</b>		
Visitors safely and respectfully enjoy the reserve.	Visitor satisfaction (high).	Visitor satisfaction monitoring.
	Number of safety related incidents (low).	Routine reporting.
<b>5. Managing Country</b>		
Natural and cultural values of the reserve are maintained.	Visual integrity (high).	Visitor satisfaction monitoring.
	Area of active soil erosion (low).	Periodic and opportunistic sightings. Erosion monitoring program if it is needed.
	Disturbance to waterholes and riparian vegetation (low).	
	Traditional Owner satisfaction with the control, directions and progress of cultural matters (high).	Partner satisfaction monitoring.
	All critical actions within annual fire, weed and feral animal plans and/or programs are undertaken (actioned/not actioned).	Reporting opportunistic sightings, research, survey and monitoring programs.
	Flora, fauna and biophysical information added to databases (increasing).	
	Weeds absent in weed free areas and presence/cover of major threatening weeds species (presence/absence).	
	Number of sightings of feral animals (low).	Biophysical recording and data management.
	Frequency and area burnt by wildfire (low).	
Frequency and area burnt by managed fires (consistent with assumed/preferred fire regimes).		
		Fire recording, fire mapping and data management.

General Objectives	Performance Measures	Means
<b>6. Managing Business</b>		
Aims and directions of this plan are achieved with available resources used efficiently.	Implementation of annual plans and/or programs (% of priority actions complete).	Ongoing record-keeping and annual review.
Indigenous training, employment and enterprise development is fostered.	Subject to Traditional Owners expressed interests and capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New skills acquired by Traditional Owners (increasing).</li> <li>- Number of days employment in relation to the reserve (increasing).</li> <li>- Number of contract opportunities created and taken up (increasing).</li> <li>- Level of income received by Traditional Owners from the reserve (increasing).</li> </ul>	
Messages and images of the reserve remain consistent with the reserves values.	Incidents of inaccurate or inappropriate promotion (low).	
Monitoring, research and survey benefit the reserve and its management.	Research, survey and monitoring programs implemented (ongoing).	Partner satisfaction monitoring.  Annual operational review.

## Appendix 2. Selected Information Sources

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- Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts. *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, [http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nt/consol\\_act/tpawca451/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nt/consol_act/tpawca451/) (accessed 3 May 2007).
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- Northern Territory Government. *Northern Territory Tourism Strategic Plan 2003-2007*, Territory Tourist Commission, Darwin (2003).
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- Travers, M. *Hatches Creek and Wauchope Wolfram Mines: a history and heritage assessment of physical remains*. Unpublished report prepared for the National Trust of Australia (NT), Darwin (1988).
- Twidale, C. The Devil's Marbles, Central Australia. *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia*. Vol 104 (Pt. 3), pp. 41-49 (1980).

## Appendix 3. Traditional Owners and their Connection to Country

Under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act* (ALRA), traditional Aboriginal owners, in relation to land, means a local descent group of Aboriginals who:

- Have common spiritual affiliations to a site on the land, being affiliations that place the group under a primary spiritual responsibility for that site and for that land;
- Are entitled by Aboriginal tradition to forage over that land.

Traditional Owners with the area discussed is based on the following attributes:







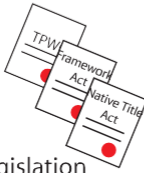





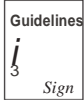
1. Descent from father's father (*Kirda*) and mother's father (*Kurdungurlu*);
2. Status of half-*Kirda* by virtue of shared dreaming lines, appropriate subsection and moiety affiliation, and ritual affiliation with the area;
3. Adoption or incorporation on the grounds of spirit conception at a site on the estate, together with half-sibling link to patri-group members;
4. *Kurdungurlu* status on the grounds of seniority, knowledge and ritual responsibility, but in the absence of close genealogical links.

Responsibility for the maintenance of the country and sacred sites of the area is thus shared by these two groups of individuals. It is *Kurdungurlu* duty to 'look after' sacred sites at the request of *Kirda* owners. *Kirda* are commonly referred to as 'owners' whereas *Kurdungurlu* are known as 'managers'. In the specific case of *Karlu Karlu*, a third category of people comes into play. Half-*Kirda* are individuals associated with the area by virtue of sharing ownership of Dreaming lines.

In this case, one of those is the *Wakuwarlpa* (wild plum) Dreaming ancestor's journey which joins the *Wakurlpu*, *Wurrulju* and *Antarengeny* estates. Another is the *Mantaratji* lizard dreaming line. Half-*Kirda* exercise secondary ownership rights on the area, providing support to full *Kirda* individuals. The groups associated with the area can be described as follows:

Moiety	Warlpiri	Warumungu	Kaytetye	Alyawarra
Kingili	Nakamarra/Jakamarra Nampinjimpa/Jampinjimpa	Nakkamarra/Jakkamarra Nampin/Jampin	Kemarre Mpetyane	Akemarre
Kirda	Nupurula/Jupurula Nangala/Jangala	Nuppurula/Juppurula Nangali/Jangali	Pwerle Thangale	Apwerl
Wulurru	Napaljarri/Japaljarri Napangarti/Japangarti	Naljarri/Jappaljarri Nappangarti/Jappangarti	Kapetye Pengarte	Apetyarr
Kurdungurlu	Nungarrayi/Jungarrayi Napanangka/Japanangka	Namikili/Jungarrayi Nappanangka/Jappanangka	Kngwarraye Penangke	Kngwarrey

## Appendix 4. A Glossary of Graphics

		Traditional Owner Worker
Aboriginal	Traditional Owners	
		Manager Administration
NT Government	Parks and Wildlife	
		Chief District Ranger
Australian Government	Joint Management	
		CLC Joint Management Officer
Legislation	Central Land Council (CLC)	
		Ranger
Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA)	Joint Management Committee and Advisory Groups	
		(i) Advisory Group
Permit	Joint Management Committee	
		
Guidelines		

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## **Appendix 5. Extracts from Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act**

part iii – joint management of certain parks and reserves

Division 3 – Joint management partners, objective and principles

### **25AA. Joint management partners**

**(1) The joint management partners for a park or reserve are –**

- (a) the Territory or a body nominated by the Territory as the representative of the Territory;  
and
- (b) the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve.

**(2) The joint management partners are together responsible for the management of the park or reserve.**

**(3) The joint management partners must perform their functions under this Part in respect of a park or reserve in a manner that –**

- (a) is consistent with any lease referred to in section 8(c) or 10(1)(f) of the *Framework Act* entered into in respect of the park or reserve;
- (b) is consistent with the joint management agreement referred to in section 8(d) of the *Framework Act* entered into in respect of the park or reserve;
- (c) is consistent with any indigenous land use agreement referred to in section 8(e) of the *Framework Act* entered into in respect of the park or reserve;
- (d) achieves the objective stated in section 25AB;
- (e) is in accordance with the principles stated in section 25AC; and
- (f) is in accordance with the joint management plan for the park or reserve.

### **25AB. Objective of joint management**

The objective of joint management of a park or reserve is to jointly establish an equitable partnership to manage and maintain the park or reserve as part of a comprehensive and representative system of parks and reserves in the Territory and for the following purposes:

- (a) benefiting both the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve and the wider community;
- (b) protecting biological diversity;
- (c) serving visitor and community needs for education and enjoyment.

### **25AC. Principles of joint management**

The objective is to be achieved by managing the park or reserve in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) recognising, valuing and incorporating Aboriginal culture, knowledge and decision making processes;
- (b) utilising the combined land management skills and expertise of both joint management partners;
- (c) recognising and addressing the need for institutional support and capacity building of the joint management partners;



- (d) recognising that community living areas in or in close proximity to parks and reserves are an integral part of the natural and cultural resource management of parks and reserves;
- (e) involving continuing statutory responsibilities and functions of the Minister with respect to parks and reserves;
- (f) managing parks and reserves may include cooperative management agreements for areas of land outside parks and reserves;
- (g) establishing a process for the consideration of applications for mining and petroleum

## **Division 6 – Role of Land Councils**

### **25AN. Application of Division**

This Division applies in relation to the parks and reserves specified in Schedules 2 and 3 to the Framework Act.

### **25AO. Functions of Land Councils in relation to parks and reserves**

(1) Pursuant to section 23(2) of ALRA, the following functions are conferred on a Land Council:

- (a) to ascertain and express the wishes and the opinion of Aboriginals living in its area as to the management of the parks and reserves in that area and as to appropriate legislation concerning those parks and reserves;
- (b) to protect the interests of the traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aboriginals interested in, those parks and reserves;
- (c) to consult with the traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aboriginals interested in, those parks and reserves about the use of those parks and reserves;
- (d) to negotiate with persons desiring to obtain an estate or interest (including a licence) in any of those parks or reserves on behalf of the traditional Aboriginal owners of that park or reserve and any other Aboriginals interested in that park or reserve;
- (e) to supervise, and provide administrative and other assistance to, the Park Land Trusts holding, or established to hold, park freehold title in parks and reserves in its area.

(2) In carrying out its functions under subsection (1) in relation to a park or reserve in its area, a Land Council must have regard to the interests of, and must consult with, the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve and any other Aboriginals interested in the park or reserve and, in particular, must not take any action (including, but not limited to, the giving or withholding of consent in any matter in connection with the park freehold title held by a Park Land Trust) unless the Land Council is satisfied that –

- (a) the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve understand the nature and purpose of the proposed action and, as a group, consent to it; and
- (b) any Aboriginal community or group that may be affected by the proposed action has been consulted and has had adequate opportunity to express its view to the Land Council.

(3) In this section –

“area”, in relation to a Land Council, has the same meaning as in ALRA;

“park freehold title” has the same meaning as in the Framework Act;

“Park Land Trust” has the same meaning as in the Framework Act.



Northern  
Territory  
Government

Attachment 18



# Mary River National Park

Joint Management Plan March 2015



PARKS AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Front Cover photos are courtesy of Tourism NT

This document is available at: [www.parksandwildlife.nt.gov.au/manage/plans](http://www.parksandwildlife.nt.gov.au/manage/plans)

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## Executive Summary

Mary River National Park is located in the northern most part of the Northern Territory in tropical wetland, savanna and woodland country 100 km east from Darwin. The park comprises fourteen separate land parcels of varying size and contains biodiversity values of national and international significance. The main purpose of the park is to protect and conserve its outstanding natural, cultural and visitor values and to provide opportunities for the public to enjoy high quality experiences.

The park lies within the traditional country of the Limilngan People in the north and west and Uwynmil People to the south. It is jointly managed by the Traditional Owners of the Park and the Northern Territory of Australia, represented by the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory. Through joint management the park will be managed for the benefit of both the Traditional Owners and the wider community.

The park is visited by local, interstate and international visitors. The park is renowned for excellent fishing, particularly during the runoff and when the saltwater section of the Mary River is opened for fishing each year. The park offers spectacular wildlife viewing with large flocks of water birds gathering on the floodplain. Mary River National Park is one of the best places to see saltwater (estuarine) crocodiles in their natural environment in Australia. Visitors can also experience the remoteness of the Northern Territory by heading out on one of the park's four wheel drive tracks.

This Joint Management Plan sets out how the values of this park will be protected and enhanced. Construction of new all-weather accessible infrastructure, including viewing platforms, walkways and bird hides, will increase visitor enjoyment of the park. The visitor experience will be further enriched through stories of the area's Aboriginal cultural heritage as told by its Traditional Owners. The Plan also encourages commercial enterprise, particularly where visitor opportunities are enhanced and employment of Traditional Owners and their families are provided.

The Plan outlines how the park's ecosystems and species will be safeguarded against threats so that future generations can continue to enjoy the park. The varied ecosystems of the park support numerous rare and threatened plant and animal species. Of even greater significance than these are the sheer numbers of common species such as magpie geese. The floodplains are important breeding habitat for many species and support populations of waterbirds and crocodiles.

The park's values are challenged by many ongoing threats. Weeds such as olive hymenachne and mimosa can colonise whole floodplains, excluding native species and reducing wetland habitat diversity, while gamba and mission grasses fuel intense late Dry season wildfires within the parks woodlands. Feral animals including pigs and buffalo erode fragile soils and spread weeds and exotic diseases. Reduced fine scale burning and increased widespread wildfires cause changes to vegetation structures. The parks' multiple unconnected land portions add another layer of difficulty in managing these threats. However, by the partners working together, strategically in collaboration with the park's neighbours and supported by other government agencies, these difficulties can be overcome.

The resource-rich Mary River floodplain has supported large numbers of people for millennia. The region is crisscrossed by the pathways of many ancestral beings, or Dreamings, whose exploits are given tangible form in a number of sacred sites located through the current park and its environment (Mearns 2009). The Plan sets out the ways in which Traditional Owners will

play a major role in the management of the park and benefit from employment and tourism enterprise.

Significant historical sites relating to expeditions of early explorer John McDouall Stuart are located within the park. Other adventurers in the form of crocodile and buffalo hunters followed by pastoralists forged strong working relationships with the ancestors of today's Traditional Owners. These ancestors had extraordinary bush skills which formed an integral part of new economic enterprises. Some legends were made during this time, including crack shots in the saddle and highly skilled cattlemen. Whole families were involved and contributed in a range of ways, from supplementing diet with bush foods, cleaning and salting skins, cooking and so on. Stories from this time are found in many popular biographies and are remembered with fondness and pride around the campfire. It is recognised that Traditional Owners have much valuable knowledge of the land and it is an objective of this Plan to incorporate this knowledge into how the park is managed.

Effective governance is a high priority for the joint management partners. Policies and guidelines will continue to be developed and refined by the partners in addition to those outlined in this Plan. The Plan outlines aims and management actions relating to the values of the park. It also outlines monitoring and evaluation of actions, and processes to be followed so that management is adaptive and looks continually toward improvement. This will mean that the park's natural and cultural values are maintained for generations to come, visitors continue to enjoy the park, joint management enjoys widespread community support and Traditional Owners benefit from the partnership.



*Plate 1: All wetland areas of the park are open to recreational fishing*  
Photo courtesy Tourism NT

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## Vision for Mary River National Park

Through a cooperative joint management partnership:

- The park's wetland experiences, important habitat and significant breeding and feeding grounds are protected;
- Healthy country and culture are maintained for future generations;
- Visitors understand, respect and enjoy the park's natural and cultural heritage; and
- Business and the wider community are engaged, with partnerships established benefitting all.



*Plate 2: Photography is a popular visitor activity within the park*

### 1. Introduction

Located approximately 100 km east of Darwin, the 112,000 hectare Mary River National Park (the park) includes sections of the lower and middle Mary River Catchment (see Map 1). The park consists of fourteen parcels of land forming eight separate 'islands' within an extensive wetland complex that stretches from the Adelaide River in the west to the East Alligator River in the east and comprises some of the most extensive freshwater swamplands in Australia.

The land parcels that make up the park listed from north to south are Point Stuart Coastal Reserve, Stuart's Tree Historical Reserve, Mary River Conservation Reserve, Point Stuart Road Corridor, Alligator Lagoon, Swim Creek, Shady Camp, Opium Creek, Boggy Springs, Jimmy's Creek Monsoon Forest, Wildman River, Annaburroo Delta Block, Mary River Crossing and McKinlay Sector (see Table 1 and Map 1). Declaration of Mary River National Park for 12 of the park's 14 land parcels occurred in January 2012. Mary River Conservation Reserve was declared part of the park in June 2012 while Stuart's Tree was declared an Historical Reserve in November 2002.

Whilst the Mary River is a major focus of the park for visitors and sections of the banks of the Mary River are part of the park, the river itself is a public waterway and is not part of the park

*per se*. This means that activities on the Mary River may impact the park but are largely outside the control of park managers. A significant proportion of people accessing the Mary River and associated billabongs do so through the park. Entry to the accessible sections of the park is from the Arnhem Highway or from the Point Stuart Road off the Arnhem Highway.

**Table 1.** Reservation status for each land parcel within Mary River National Park.

Site Name	Size in hectares	Portion	Owner (tenure)
Point Stuart Coastal Reserve	5,154 ha	NTP 4435	CLC (Freehold)
Stuart's Tree Historical Reserve	4 ha	NTP 971	Crown Reserve 1166
Alligator Lagoon	277 ha	NTP 2718	CLC (Freehold)
Point Stuart Road Corridor	262 ha	NTP 4111	CLC (CLP 1205)
Swim Creek	128 ha	NTP 4433	CLC (Freehold)
Shady Camp	636 ha	NTP 4063	CLC (Freehold)
Opium Creek	210 ha	NTP 2723	CLC (CLP 941)
Boggy Springs	36 ha	NTP 2722	CLC (CLP 940)
Jimmy's Creek Monsoon Forest	194 ha	NTP 2721	CLC (CLP 939)
Wildman River	14,810 ha	NTP 2622	CLC (CLP 338)
Annaburroo Delta Block	7,690 ha	NTP 4121	CLC (CLP 1255)
Mary River Crossing Reserve	2,590 ha	NTP 1832	CLC (Freehold)
McKinlay Sector	51,340 ha	NTP 4425	CLC (CLP 1466)
Mary River Conservation Reserve	27,910 ha	NTP 2013	CLC (CLP 1548)*

NTP – Northern Territory Portion; CLC – Conservation Land Corporation; CLP – Crown Lease Perpetual

\*This portion is under a lease agreement for grazing with Marrakai Station until 2020.

## 1.1 Key Values

The key values of the park are:

- **Natural** – The extensive wetland and floodplain systems are rich in biodiversity. Two international Sites of Conservation Significance cover approximately fifty per cent of the park's area; two nationally-significant wetlands cover parts of the park, including the entire Mary River floodplain; Mary River is noted as the most significant and reliable breeding habitat for magpie geese in the Northern Territory, and as important breeding and feeding grounds for water, shore and sea-birds. The park provides important habitat for large numbers of freshwater and saltwater (estuarine) crocodiles.
- **Cultural** – The Mary River floodplain is a resource-rich environment and it has supported large numbers of people through the ages. The pathways of ancestral spiritual beings, or Dreamings, are located throughout the region. Dreamings are recorded in a number of sacred sites located through the park (Mearnes 2009). There are more than 20 sacred sites registered within the park and many more remain unrecorded. The Dreamings are the spiritual connection between Indigenous people and the land and are a highly significant part of their being. Men's ceremonies have been held in the park within living memory and there are a number of sites associated with women's traditions (Mearnes 2009).
- **Recreational** – The Mary River floodplain is one of the most important recreational fishing sites in the Northern Territory. Other recreation activities offered in the park include four

wheel driving, boating, camping, walking, wildlife viewing and nature photography.

- **Historical** – The park contains a number of nationally and regionally significant historical sites including a rock cairn at Chambers Bay commemorating the explorer John McDouall Stuart who was the first European to cross Australia from south to north in 1862.



*Plate 3: The park provides important wetland habitat for plants and animals*

## 1.2 Purpose of the Park

Mary River National Park will be managed to retain its character and maintain its heritage and natural resources. The park will provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy the landscape and wildlife and at the same time learn about its cultural and natural heritage. Limilngan and Uwynmil traditional knowledge and values will be protected and integrated into management of the park.

## 1.3 Objectives of the Plan

This is the first Joint Management Plan (the Plan) to be prepared for Mary River National Park. A previous draft Plan was prepared and released for public comment in September 2011 and then disallowed by the Legislative Assembly in February 2013. This new Plan has been developed by the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory (Parks and Wildlife Commission) and the Limilngan and Uwynmil Traditional Owners for the park, with assistance from the Northern Land Council and other key stakeholder groups, including the tourism industry and recreational groups. It was prepared in accordance with the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* (TPWC Act), and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) registered with the National Native Title Tribunal pursuant to the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth). This Plan has been written for the joint management partners, to guide and support them in joint management. It is also a public document by which the public may learn about the park, its values and management.

This Plan explains how the partners will work together to look after the park. It provides actions for operational planning and day-to-day programs and sets objectives against which performance will be measured. It provides for the ongoing conservation of the park's significant natural and cultural values, continued public use and enjoyment and ensures that future

development of the park is appropriate. It shows how public interests in the park will be best served while recognising that the park is of deep cultural and spiritual significance to the Traditional Owners.

Management Actions stated within this Plan have been given a priority rating of Low, Medium or High. This rating is purely a guide and implementation of many of these actions is subject to the availability of resources.

This Joint Management Plan will remain in effect until amended or replaced by a new plan, preferably within ten years.

## 1.4 Joint Management

Joint management means the park is being managed in partnership by the Parks and Wildlife Commission and the Traditional Owners of the park. Joint management is about the partners exchanging their knowledge and expertise, solving problems and sharing decisions. It is about considering the interests of the wider community and liaising with stakeholders. And it is about achieving shared goals and aspirations, a richer visitor experience, protected natural and cultural values and opportunities for Traditional Owners

The joint management partners for Mary River National Park are the Northern Territory of Australia (Territory) and the traditional Aboriginal owners (Traditional Owners). The Territory is represented by the Parks and Wildlife Commission which carries out the Territory's joint management obligations. For the purposes of this Joint Management Plan, references to the Parks and Wildlife Commission as a joint management partner should be read as a reference to the Territory. When this Plan refers to the partners it refers to both groups of Traditional Owners, the Limilngan and Uwynmil People, and the Parks and Wildlife Commission.

Mary River National Park was listed on Schedule 3 of the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act* in June 2005. This means the Traditional Owners do not hold title to the land. The terms of joint management for the park are established under the TPWC Act and an ILUA signed in March 2005. Among other conditions, the ILUA establishes the joint management of the park for 99 years.



Plate 4: Joint Managers - Members of the Mary River Joint Management Committee

**For the Traditional Owners joint management means:**

Working together with park rangers to manage country and to have a place to teach, learn and share knowledge and culture for generations to come as well as gain social and economic benefit from the park.

**For the partnership joint management means:**

Making decisions together and sharing knowledge through open communication. The joint management partners believe in the long-term environmental and human outcomes gained by forging a strong, cooperative joint management arrangement for Mary River National Park.

**Traditional Owners**

The Limilngan and Uwynmil are the Traditional Owners of Mary River National Park and have a long and complex association with the area. Both groups were signatories to the ILUA for the park. Limilngan People and Uwynmil People come from two distinct groups from two different areas within the park. They do not necessarily share one voice. The two groups of Traditional Owners come from closely related family groups and are descendants of Traditional Owners who worked first in the crocodile industry and then later in the buffalo, cattle and pastoral industries.

The Traditional Owners of this area have continued to live and work on the land for many generations. In more recent times, opportunities for families to continue to work and live on their traditional lands became more limited. However, the traditional rights and responsibility to look after their land, culture, and families have always remained and have continued to be handed down through the generations via accepted traditions and cultural practice.

The Traditional Owners believe that joint management will allow them to once again work on country to balance their traditional values with modern responsibilities. As custodians of this land, Traditional Owners value the opportunity to share their rich knowledge with Parks and Wildlife Commission staff and visitors to the park. They look forward to building a partnership with the community and with the Parks and Wildlife Commission to see that the park is managed in accordance with traditional values.

**Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory**

The Parks and Wildlife Commission recognises that Mary River National Park, with its strong natural and cultural values and myriad of recreational activities close to Darwin, is a highly-significant park amongst the Northern Territory's considerable conservation estate. The Parks and Wildlife Commission is dedicated to conserving these values while providing high-quality nature-based tourism and recreation opportunities for visitors. The Parks and Wildlife Commission is committed to engaging the public and working with the interests of the wider community. The Parks and Wildlife Commission is committed to seeing that the partnership grows and becomes truly equitable and that the Traditional Owners benefit culturally, socially and economically from joint management.

This Plan has been developed by the partners in a positive spirit. Like the Traditional Owners of the park, the Parks and Wildlife Commission is optimistic about the future.

## **1.5 Zoning**

Mary River National Park is managed for multiple purposes, including nature conservation, the provision of a range of visitor experiences and the protection of cultural values. Different areas of the park will be managed differently, usually with greater emphasis on one of these purposes.



A zoning scheme is a general summary of the purpose and focus of management for all areas of the park based on the specific values of those areas and their level of visitor access and facility development.

The zoning scheme (see Table 2 and Map 1) indicates management intent at the time of this Plan's preparation and the location of visitor zones is representative of current visitor activities within the park. The zoning scheme is not intended as a basis for regulation of access or development and the Mary River Joint Management Committee are open to discussing future development opportunities within the park. With consultation, the zones may be changed during the term of this Plan to provide for improved protection of values and / or enhancement of visitor opportunities. Changes to the zoning scheme will require amendment of this Plan.

#### Aim

- Park values protected whilst encouraging public enjoyment, education and recreation.
- Joint management partners working together to make informed, consistent, transparent and accountable decisions that allow the Traditional Owners to meet their obligations to country.

#### Management Actions

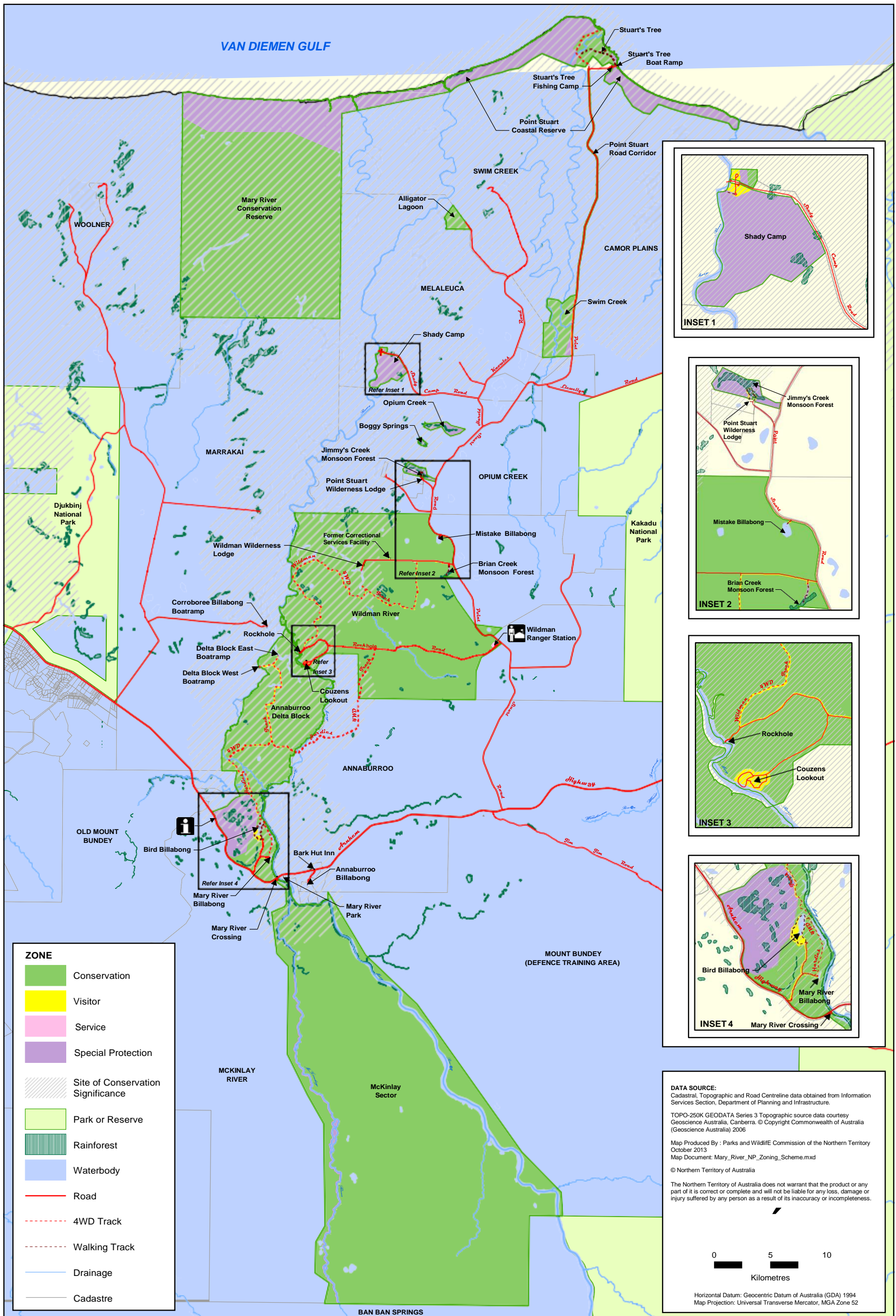
1. **Zoning** – The park will be managed in accordance with the zoning scheme. Regardless of the designated zone all management and development will have regard to maintaining the park's natural character, its conservation values and visitor experiences. (*Ongoing*)
2. **Isolated land parcels** – The value of some isolated land parcels within Mary River National Park will be assessed during the life of the Plan. (*High*)
3. **New development** – Any new proposed development will be subject to consultation and permissions in accordance with legislated environmental, sacred site and heritage assessment processes. (*Ongoing*)
4. **Changing the zoning scheme** The partners will consult with other stakeholders and their concerns and ideas considered before major changes are made to the zoning scheme. (*Ongoing*)
5. **Special protection zones** – To protect sites of exceptional cultural or conservation significance from threatening processes, special protection zones can be designated by the partners in consultation with stakeholders. (*Ongoing*)



**Table 2.** Zoning Scheme Summary for Mary River National Park.

<b>Zone</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Access</b>	<b>Visitor Activities</b>	<b>Facilities</b>	<b>Management Strategy</b>
<b>Visitor</b>	To provide for high levels of visitor use close to major attractions with infrastructure and facilities.	Formed gravel roads or unsealed tracks, mostly suitable for conventional vehicles. Some unsealed tracks are suitable for four wheel drive vehicles only. Access may be restricted for part of the year due to flooding and road conditions.	Developed visitor experience with a moderate level of regulation, including camping, fishing, walking, wildlife viewing and interpretation. Commercial activities and supporting infrastructure.	Boat ramps, short walking tracks, toilets and camping and picnic areas close to access routes. Orientation information and interpretation provided at main visitor nodes. High standard but basic visitor facilities (reflecting the level and type of use).	Visitor information, control and monitoring. Weed and feral animal control, fire management.
<b>Service</b>	To provide for park management and operation facilities.	Emergency contact and / or regulated experience supervised by park managers.	Regulated access supervised by park managers.	Management facilities only, offices, workshops, accommodation, utility maintenance facilities.	Maintenance of management facilities and services.
<b>Special Protection</b>	To protect significant natural and cultural values, includes the Mount Bunday Hills, the tidal mudflats of Chambers Bay and Jimmy’s Creek Monsoon Forest.	Public access by permit only. Access for approved programs and for cultural activities for Traditional Owners, consistent with directions of the partners.	Management activities and highly regulated visitor experiences consistent with any restrictions directed by the partners.	Facilities appropriate to protect the site e.g. interpretive signs and barriers.	Management of natural and cultural values as required.
<b>Conservation and Dispersed Use</b>	To manage the vast majority of the park for the protection of natural and cultural features. Access is limited due to seasonal flooding.	Four wheel drive access. More remote and self-guided visitor experiences. Mainly suitable for nature / cultural based tourism i.e. Specialist Tours (commercial / concessions) and self-reliant travellers. Permit approved commercial activities allowed.	Largely restricted for management purposes. Overnight walking and camping by permit only.	Basic visitor facilities may be provided including formed walking tracks and marked four wheel drive tracks. New development may occur subject to approval through legislated environmental, sacred site and heritage assessment processes.	Main focus on natural and cultural values and fire, weed and feral animal control programs. Maintain walking tracks, and four wheel drive tracks. Monitor visitor impacts on the natural values.

Map 1: Mary River National Park Zoning



## 2. Governance

For the purposes of joint management the term ‘governance’ means how the partners organise themselves to work towards their vision. It includes all aspects of communication, partnership, planning and decision-making. It is recognised by the partners that the joint management partnership will need to keep growing and improving through commitment and gaining new skills in governance.

To be successful, the partners must look after the park in a way that meets the values and interests of the Parks and Wildlife Commission, the Limilngan People, the Uwynmil People, and the wider community. The partners agree that:

- Statutory responsibilities and obligations are primary considerations;
- Decision-making will be equitably shared;
- Planning and decision-making must identify and manage risks;
- Management priorities are guided by the requirement to protect the park’s key values;
- Resources will be prioritised annually and used efficiently;
- Engagement and employment of Traditional Owners in management operations is central to joint management success; and
- Joint management will be monitored so the partnership can continue to improve.

### 2.1 Planning and Decision-Making

The partners are required to manage the park for the benefit of Traditional Owners and the wider community and to be accountable to each other and to the wider community for planning and decision-making. The partners will need to plan and make decisions largely related to operational plans and strategies, permits, licences and leases, and infrastructure development (see Table 3, Figure 1). The partners may also be required to develop or comment on guidelines, standard operating procedures and policies that influence management of Mary River National Park where these differ significantly from overarching Parks and Wildlife Commission policy.

#### Building Effective Governance through Monitoring and Evaluation

This Plan sets out a framework for the park’s governance. By monitoring joint management, the partners will be able to identify problems and make changes early, and in doing so, continue to improve and build strong governance over time. Key areas to be monitored include implementation of annually agreed priorities, accomplishment of the performance measures at the back of this Plan (see Appendix 1) and achievement toward the longer-term Aims relating to country, culture and visitors.

#### A Partnership Approach

The partners know and agree that:

- Success depends on a strong partnership built on mutual trust and respect and clear communication;
- A good understanding of the principles of effective governance and good decision-making is needed to properly meet legal obligations;
- Two-way learning and time spent together on country is critical for developing mutual trust,



respect and understanding between the partners. Both partners want to share and incorporate their knowledge into park management;

- Having clear roles and responsibilities will also help the partners to properly exercise their legal obligations and be accountable for their management of the park;
- Park managers are accountable to the wider community, and the partners will need to engage with and consider their interests when making decisions to maintain good working relationships with their neighbours and the wider community; and
- Traditional Aboriginal decision-making needs to be respected.

The partners have agreed to a small Joint Management Committee as a practical means to share responsibility and accountability for planning and decision-making for the park. As joint management requires a practical relationship, a flexible approach to decision-making is required. The partners will promote an open, transparent approach to problem solving and making management decisions together. Figure 1 outlines the planning and decision-making process for this park and shows how the partners contribute.

### Clear Roles and Responsibilities

Effective governance requires clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the people and groups involved (see Table 3 and Figure 1). The distinction between direction setting, planning, policy, routine decisions and day-to-day action is very important.

**Traditional Owners** provide an essential contribution to the direction and management of the park. Particular Traditional Owners may be custodians for specific areas or traditions and have responsibilities for decision-making and overseeing cultural protocol relating to these areas. Traditional Owners also have responsibilities for managing traditional knowledge and passing it on to the right people, looking after the land and its resources, maintaining sacred sites and keeping the country healthy. Traditional Owners are responsible to the land, their law and culture. Traditional Owners expect park rangers to make routine decisions. Traditional Owners may be involved in both roles if they are employed as park rangers by the Parks and Wildlife Commission.

**Parks and Wildlife Commission** staff are responsible for day-to-day management of the Park. This includes funding and providing resources for the park's ongoing management, including administrative functions, staffing, infrastructure and visitor services. The Parks and Wildlife Commission includes on-ground staff and those who provide them with support. All Parks and Wildlife Commission employees are responsible to the Minister for Parks and Wildlife and the head of the agency. The Parks and Wildlife Commission must consider this park in the broader context of the Northern Territory's network of parks and reserves.

**Northern Territory Government** departments will work collaboratively with the partners to provide advice, support and services for particular issues within the park. For example the Weed Management Branch from the Department of Land Resource Management or relevant government agency, provides expert advice on weed issues and control.

The **Northern Land Council** has an important role in supporting joint management. The TPWC Act defines the Northern Land Council's role as primarily to represent and protect the interests of Traditional Owners in park management.

The **Mary River Joint Management Committee (MRJMC)** includes representatives of each of the joint management partners and at the time of this Plan's preparation membership consists of two senior Parks and Wildlife Commission staff and seven Traditional Owner representatives. Currently the quorum for MRJMC meetings is two Parks and Wildlife Commission staff and four of the seven Traditional Owner members. The MRJMC's role is to set the broad direction for management of the

park through planning and policy development, but does not have a direct role in day-to-day operations. To allow for greater flexibility in decision-making, the MRJMC may choose to establish Working Groups to carry out projects associated with the implementation of this Plan.

Committee members are responsible for representing the shared knowledge, interests and concerns of their group. They also have a responsibility to pass information back to the wider Traditional Owner group, local community and key stakeholders. The Parks and Wildlife Commission will maintain regular formal and informal contact and engagement with Traditional Owners members of the MRJMC throughout the year. The Northern Land Council will provide support where required.

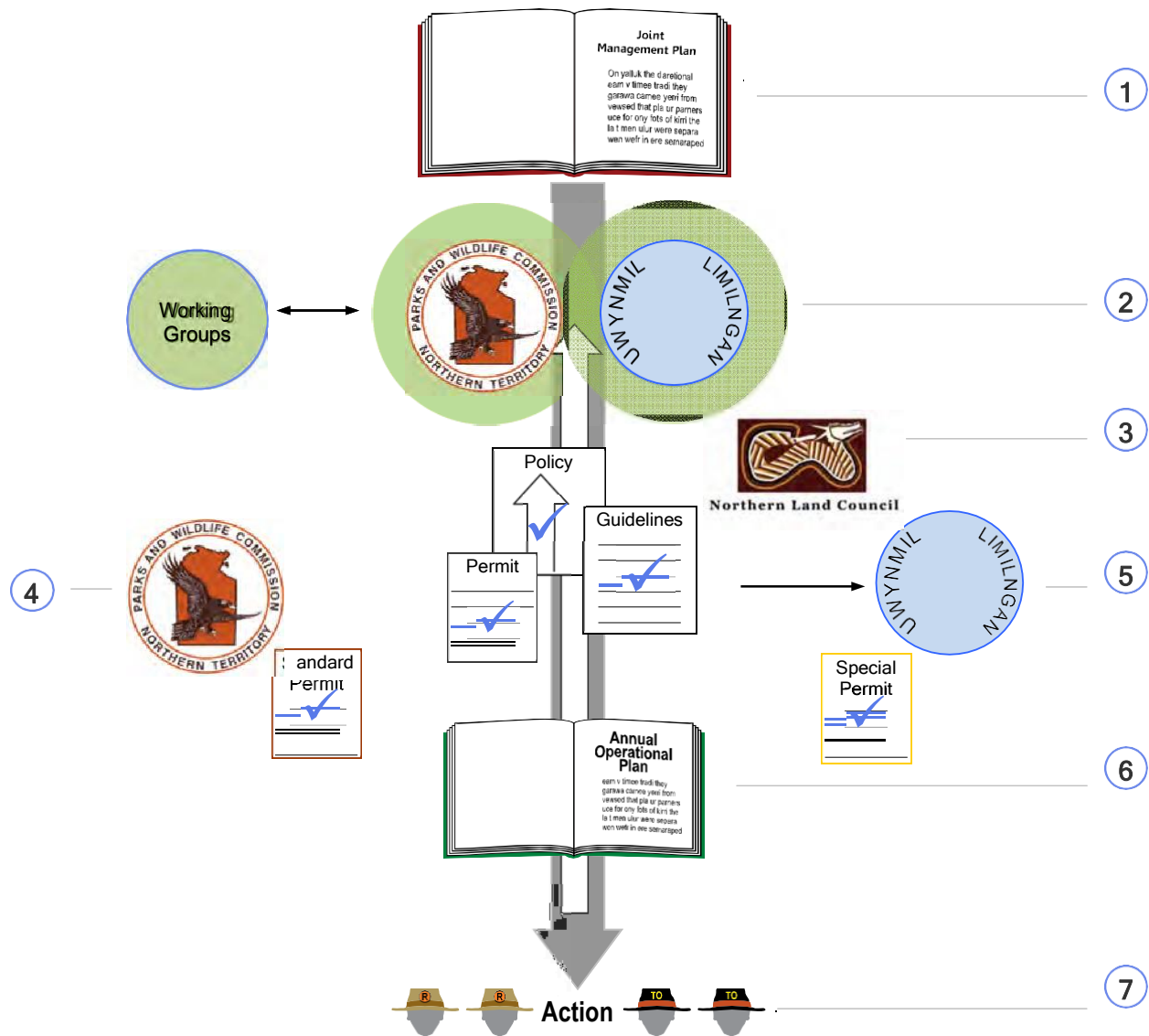
### Resolving Disputes

The Parks and Wildlife Commission, Limilngan People and Uwynmil People know that they all need to continue to communicate clearly and openly with one another and that communication within the wider group of Traditional Owners needs to stay strong. However, from time to time disputes may occur. The partners will aim to resolve disputes through open discussion and communication, involving the Northern Land Council as required or requested by the Traditional Owners. However, should a dispute arise between the partners that cannot be resolved, the parties agree to jointly appoint an independent mediator to facilitate a mutually acceptable decision. If the Limilngan People and the Uwynmil People disagree with one another then the Northern Land Council will facilitate the mediation process, independent of the Parks and Wildlife Commission.

**Table 3.** Decision-making framework for Mary River National Park

<b>Roles &amp; Responsibilities</b>	
Mary River Joint Management Committee	Parks and Wildlife Commission Operational Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise responsibility for the management of the park</li> <li>• Provide strategic management direction and advice to park operations</li> <li>• Endorse annual operational plans and allocated operational budget for the park</li> <li>• Endorse policy and assist with development of procedural direction</li> <li>• Consider commercial and development proposals in line with agreed planning and approval processes and guidelines</li> <li>• Delegate tasks to Working Groups as appropriate</li> <li>• Monitor, evaluate and report on the progress and effectiveness of joint management</li> <li>• Engage with other stakeholders at the strategic level</li> <li>• Consider other proposals or issues not otherwise specified in this Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day-to-day management of the park</li> <li>• Implement operational plans, policy and procedures as endorsed by the MRJMC</li> <li>• Use best endeavours to employ Indigenous people in the management of the park</li> <li>• Monitor commercial operations and compliance with the TPWC Act, By-laws, permits and agreements</li> <li>• Liaise with stakeholders and neighbours</li> <li>• Be accountable to the Northern Territory Government</li> <li>• Report progress annually to the MRJMC</li> <li>• Issue permits according to the TPWC By-laws and, as appropriate, policies and guidelines endorsed by the partners</li> <li>• Develop operational plans and allocate resources to deliver (in consultation with Traditional Owners for endorsement of the MRJMC)</li> <li>• Routine decisions necessary to implement approved operational plans</li> </ul>

**Figure 1.** Planning and decision-making process for Mary River National Park



**1** The **Joint Management Plan** says how the joint management partners intend to manage the park together for the benefit of the wider community and Traditional Owners in accordance with the law.

**2** The **Mary River Joint Management Committee (MRJMC)** is a representative decision-making body that will meet to consider permit applications and endorse agreed operational plans, policies and guidelines. Flexible approaches to decision-making, such as Working Groups and on country camps, will also be applied.

**3** The **Northern Land Council** is responsible for consulting with and protecting the interests of Traditional Owners and supporting the Mary River Joint Management Committee.

**4** Senior **Parks and Wildlife Commission** staff approve standard permits in accordance with policies and guidelines agreed by the partners (see Table 5).

**5** The full **Traditional Owner** groups, including native title holders, may need to be consulted regarding the approval for some permits, especially those permits related to licensing for use of the park as outlined in the guidelines agreed to by the partners.

**6** **Operational Plans** include five year strategies for key management programs and annual action plans that guide day-to-day management and implementation of key management programs.

**7** **Action** involves park rangers and Traditional Owners working together to carry out agreed management programs.



### Aims

- Governing efficiently and effectively to facilitate decisions for the benefit of the park, the partnership and the wider community.
- Open communication and mutual understanding between Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Commission, and the partners satisfied with joint management.

### Management Actions

6. **The Partners** (see Figure 1) – The partners will meet at MRJMC meetings, Working Groups and on country camps as well as individually as required, allowing for a flexible approach to decision-making. MRJMC meetings are held at least once per year with the date and location agreed to by the members well in advance of the meeting. Traditional Owners involved in the Committee and Working Groups will be paid for their service consistent with the Parks and Wildlife Commission Fee for Service Policy. (*Ongoing*)
7. **Supporting and building the partnership** – The Northern Land Council will represent and support Traditional Owners' interests by aiding consultations and (if needed) resolving conflict. The partners and Northern Land Council recognise that joint management will be a process of continuous learning and growth. Governance support and training will be provided to the partners by the Northern Land Council and the Parks and Wildlife Commission focusing on the needs identified by the monitoring and evaluation program (Management Action [MA] 9). Disputes will be resolved according to the process outlined in section 2.1. (*Ongoing*)
8. **Communication** – MRJMC members will be responsible for two-way communication with the wider Traditional Owner group, local community, key stakeholders (neighbours, commercial operators, recreational groups), operational staff and higher levels of government with support from the Northern Land Council as required. (*Ongoing*)
9. **Monitoring and evaluation program** – A monitoring and evaluation program will be developed by the MRJMC to inform action for improved governance. Performance will be measured using indicators relating to satisfaction of the MRJMC members, effectiveness of the partnership and progress towards the longer-term aims stated in this Plan. (*Moderate*)
10. **Dealing with proposals not in the Plan** – Any proposal not addressed in the Plan will be considered by the MRJMC. Any matter that may affect the interests of Traditional Owners will require the consent of the relevant Traditional Owners. Any environmental, sacred site or heritage matters will be assessed in accordance with relevant legislation. (*Ongoing*)

### Performance Measures

- Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Program instigated.
- The partners are satisfied with the implementation of annual priorities and decision-sharing processes.
- Achievements related to the longer-term aims stated in this Plan (culture, country and visitors).

### 3. Natural Values

Mary River National Park is one of the Northern Territory's most important parks for biodiversity conservation. Many of the park's natural values are internationally or nationally significant and are highly important to Traditional Owners. Park rangers and the Limilngan and Uwynmil Traditional Owners share a deep respect for the land and want to look after it for future generations. They share concerns about the threats to the land including uncontrolled fire, weeds, feral animals and the threat posed by predicted climate change. The partners and the wider community will work together to maintain healthy country into the future.



*Plate 5: Magpie geese numbers within the park sometimes exceed 400,000 birds*

As a Class 1 park for biodiversity, Mary River National Park has been identified as requiring a 5 to 10 year Integrated Conservation Strategy (see section 6.1, MA 11). The strategy will set well-defined objectives and measurable targets for the most important values and threats to the park and will give a clear understanding as to the conservation successes of the park. The strategy comprises an adaptive management approach which involves regular evaluation of results and subsequent adjustment of actions so that management of the park is at an optimum. Results of the park's strategy will feed into the Management Effectiveness Framework biennial performance review.

#### 3.1 Significant Conservation Areas

Sites of Conservation Significance are those areas containing special biodiversity values that require additional protection. They are classified according to their value for threatened species, aggregations of wildlife, wetlands, endemic species and botanical significance. The Northern Territory Government has identified 67 of the most important sites for biodiversity conservation in the Northern Territory. The recognition of these sites imposes no additional regulatory or legislative requirements over the land, over and above any particular existing requirements of the area. This Plan acknowledges the classifications of Harrison *et al* (2009) in their assessment of Sites of Conservation Significance. Two sites in Mary River National Park have been classified as Sites of Conservation Significance for biodiversity (see Map 1).

##### Chambers Bay (International Significance)

Mary River National Park protects 19% of the Chambers Bay Site of Conservation Significance (Harrison *et al* 2009). This includes the saline and tidal mudflats in the Point Stuart Coastal Reserve and the Mary River Conservation Reserve (see Map 1). Chambers Bay is part of a wetland of national

importance for its extensive coastal samphire and saline tidal flats, which support large concentrations of migratory shorebirds (Environment Australia 2001).

### Mary River Coastal Floodplains (International Significance)

Mary River National Park forms part of the Mary River coastal floodplains Site of Conservation Significance (Harrison *et al.* 2009). The floodplain includes a complex mosaic of wet and dry habitats which support large and diverse populations of waterbirds. The floodplain is the most significant and reliable breeding site for magpie geese in the Northern Territory, and numbers sometimes exceed 400,000 birds. The floodplain environments provide a major breeding area for many fish species, including barramundi. Twelve threatened species can be found in the coastal floodplains and associated habitat in the park.

The Mary River wetlands have been nominated as an internationally Important Bird Area for the abundance and significance of its waterbird and shorebird populations (BirdLife Australia 2005-2007).

## 3.2 Flora

A total of 763 plant species are recorded for the park, of which four are listed as threatened. Two of the threatened plants, *Goodenia quadrifida* (nationally endangered, data deficient in the Territory), and *Schoutenia ovata* (vulnerable), are only reserved in this park. Endangered species *Helicteres macrothrix* is conserved within Mary River National Park and a population of 100 plants were translocated to George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens in 2014 as a result of a quarry expansion (Extractive Mineral Lease 27133) within the Annaburroo Delta Block. The habitat of the fourth, *Cycas armstrongii* (vulnerable), is being cleared elsewhere and the park may play an increasing role in its conservation.

The park supports patches of monsoon rainforest that are a distinct and fragmented vegetation community once widespread across northern Australia. These communities support diverse and distinct flora and fauna assemblages.

There are also healthy examples of the tall open eucalypt forests that are restricted to the higher rainfall areas of the Top End. These forests are dominated by Darwin stringybark (*Eucalyptus tetradonta*) and Darwin woollybutt (*E. miniata*) with a sorghum grassland understorey and support a diverse range of fauna. An increasing amount of this habitat is being cleared across the Top End for horticulture and forestry. The open eucalypt forests in this park will become increasingly important for biodiversity conservation.



Plate 6: *Melaleuca* swamps provide valuable nesting and roosting sites for many bird species



### 3.3 Fauna

A total of 333 vertebrate species including nine threatened species have been recorded in the park.

Mary River National Park is one of only three parks where the vulnerable yellow-snouted gecko (*Lucasium occultum*) and the endangered Alligator River subspecies of the yellow chat (*Epthianura crocea tunneyi*) are found and the park is critically important for their conservation.

The impact of the cane toad (*Rhinella marina*) has been great as it appears that the critically endangered northern quoll (*Dasyurus hallucatus*) is no longer present in the park and populations of two vulnerable goanna species (*Varanus mertensi* and *V. panoptes*) are thought to have significantly declined.

The partridge pigeon (*Geophaps smithii*) and Gouldian finch (*Erythrura gouldiae*) are threatened grassland and woodland birds that require larger areas for their conservation than that solely supplied by Mary River National Park. Protection and maintenance of habitat for these species will require cooperative management with neighbouring property managers.

Due to their sheer numbers within the park, common species are considered to be of great significance. Common species include magpie geese and other waterfowl, along with saltwater (estuarine) crocodiles. Magpie geese (*Anseranus semipalmata*) occur in large numbers across the floodplain environments, migrating from one area to the next in an annual cycle. Around March the geese nest in areas of *Hymenachne acutigluma* and *Oryza rufipogon* found in the Wildman and Mary River Conservation Reserve sectors. The geese move to sedgelands dominated by *Eleocharis* spp. from April to July while they are rearing their young, then spread out to various sites before the nesting season comes around again (Pederson 2002).



Plate 7: Magpie geese feeding amongst the water lilies on the Mary River floodplains

During twenty years of ongoing monitoring of freshwater crocodiles (*Crocodylus johnstoni*) in the McKinlay River, the population has remained mostly unaffected by human activity. As a result this population is used as a scientific reference site for determining the status of crocodile populations elsewhere in the world (Pederson 2002). The park also supports large numbers of mature saltwater (estuarine) crocodiles (*Crocodylus porosus*), and is often touted as the best place to see large (four metre plus) saltwater (estuarine) crocodiles.

## 3.4 Threats

The major threat to the biodiversity values of the park is the loss of species richness and diversity of habitat through the invasion of weeds, uncontrolled fires, activities of feral animals and saltwater intrusion. Weeds are currently the most significant threat. The fragmented nature of the park adds a layer of complexity to the management of landscape threats with the isolated portions of the park, such as Alligator Lagoon, being particularly vulnerable. These isolated portions are mostly surrounded by pastoral properties used for cattle grazing, where improved pastures are planted that act as weeds inside the park. In the longer term (five years plus) the impacts of climate change also pose a significant threat to biodiversity values.

### Weeds

Weeds represent a major threat to the biodiversity values of the park and if left unmanaged will significantly alter the structure of the ecosystems. Consequently, management of key weeds is a very high priority action for the park. Unfortunately eradication of some species over large areas is generally not feasible. Management is therefore focussed on eradication and control in select areas and of priority species.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission has a legislative responsibility under the Northern Territory *Weeds Management Act 2001* to control the spread of declared weeds and in some cases eradicate them from the park estate. All attempts must be made to eradicate Category A Weeds; Category B Weeds must be contained and controlled; and Category C Weeds must not be brought into the Northern Territory. Currently 64 weed species have been recorded in the Mary River catchment, however the resources are not available to control every weed species. The current highest priority weeds for control in Mary River National Park and their categorisation under the Act are:

- Olive hymenachne (B: *Hymenachne amplexicaulis*) and mimosa (B: *Mimosa pigra*), in the wetlands – these species have the potential to colonise the whole floodplain, excluding native species and reducing wetland habitat diversity. They also displace native Hymenachne species that provide an important food source for magpie geese.
- Gamba grass (B: *Andropogon gayanus*) and mission grass (B: *Pennisetum polystachion*), in the woodlands – these invasive species have the potential to displace native species, including the endangered *Helicteres macrothrix* flora species, and reduce habitat diversity. They also fuel intense wildfires in the late Dry season that are difficult to control and can burn with massive intensity over large areas.

Consultation and cooperative weed management will be undertaken with neighbouring property managers to reduce spread between properties. Surveillance is conducted in the park for other emerging weeds in the region. Key amongst these is Salvinia (B: *Salvinia molesta*) which can be found in waterways adjacent to the park.

### Feral Animals

Feral animals can have a major impact on the natural values of the park. They can erode fragile soils, spread weeds and exotic diseases and compete with native animals for food and habitat. There have been 16 exotic animal species recorded within the park. The complete eradication of all feral animals in the park is not feasible and there are no long-term control methods for some species.

Key feral animals affecting the park that can potentially be managed include:

- Pigs (*Sus scrofa*) – open up areas through physical disturbance and by inhibiting regeneration. Disturbed areas are vulnerable to weed invasions and erosion, particularly in drainage lines and forest. Pigs often cause major impacts in monsoon rainforest.

- Buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*) – trample sensitive vegetation, degrade freshwater habitats, spread weeds and cause erosion, and can significantly impact on nesting habitat of magpie geese and crocodiles. Large numbers of buffalo have contributed to the destruction of natural levees separating the wetland from the sea resulting in the loss of wetland habitat due to salt water intrusion.
- Feral cattle (*Bos indicus*) – enter the park from neighbouring properties through areas where fences are not maintained. Impacts are similar to buffalo but less severe in wetlands.

Integrating feral animal control with other threat abatement strategies is important. For example green pick regenerating after fire can attract grazing herbivores to an area where effective culling can occur. Options for control of these key feral species include exclusion from the park via fencing, removal from the park by mustering (stock and buffalo), population reduction via shooting (pigs and buffalo) and /or baiting (pigs).



Plate 8: Feral animals such as pigs cause considerable damage to country

Feral cats (*Felis catus*) have well established populations in the park and are a key threat to biodiversity. There is no formal control program for cats on park, nor is any suitable broad scale control option available.

It is likely that cane toads (*Rhinella marina*) reached the park during 2001 and 2002 as they progressed from the south-east. There have been noticeable declines in native species such as goannas and quolls since that time. No practical broad scale control method is presently known for cane toads.

A population of the Siamese fighting fish (*Betta splendens*) was found in the Adelaide River Floodplain in 2014. The species poses a potential threat to Mary River National Park.

## Fire

The Australian landscape, its people and fire have a relationship that dates back tens of thousands of years. Fire was first used to shape the environment through the hands of Indigenous people, and more recently, park managers and landowners. The pattern of fire use and management has changed over the years, to the detriment of some habitats. Small-scale mosaic fires have shifted to more frequent and widespread wildfires.

Monsoon rainforests, riparian forests and swamplands are not well adapted to frequent hot fire and the naturally wet conditions provide some protection. Intense wildfires in the late Dry season that are fuelled by large stands of gamba grass (*A. gayanus*) and mission grass (*P. polystachion*) penetrate the



margins of these communities, killing mature trees and removing groundcover. These areas are then susceptible to further disturbance from weed invasion and erosion, leading to unfavourable changes in structure, composition and the distribution and size of rainforest and riparian patches over time.

Woodlands require less frequent mosaic burning patterns to maintain a variety of burnt and unburnt areas and habitat diversity for wildlife. Less frequent, patchy, cool burns in the late Wet season and early Dry season can minimise the likelihood of large, intense fires.

The prevention and control of wildfire requires close collaboration with neighbouring landholders over many years. Informal and formal agreements, regional planning and on-ground work need to be developed between neighbouring pastoral, Aboriginal and reserved lands.

Long-term fire management goals will focus on protecting sacred sites, incorporating traditional burning practices, avoiding catastrophic wildfires, collaborating with neighbouring landholders and increasing community education. In addition to exploring traditional approaches to burning, fire management will require strategic fire breaks and fuel reduction burns.



*Plate 9: Undertaking early Dry season burning*

## Saltwater Intrusion

Much of the coastal floodplains north of Shady Camp are below sea level. They were originally separated from the sea by a series of parallel narrow sandy chenier ridges which are a legacy of the receding shoreline over the last 6,000 years. Since the 1940's these areas have undergone rapid changes with small tidal channels advancing inland, invading the freshwater swamps and billabongs and changing these environments from predominantly freshwater to saline. This saltwater intrusion is thought to have been caused by a number of inter-related activities including large numbers of water buffalos and deliberate destruction of natural levees.

Since 1987 a major saltwater control program by the Northern Territory Government has aimed to halt the expansion of saltwater channels into the freshwater floodplains of the Mary River. Construction of artificial levees has taken place, such as the off-park barrage built across the river at Shady Camp. Over 2,000 hectares of freshwater grassland and Melaleuca swamps in the Coastal Reserve have since been restored. The program requires ongoing annual maintenance and repairs. The only artificial levees or barrages located on park land are within Mary River Conservation Reserve which is leased by Marrakai Station (see section 6.6). From a park management perspective controlling the number of buffalo and feral cattle on the floodplain helps reduce the degradation of natural levees. Any future proposals to construct water control devices on park land will involve discussions with key stakeholders, including the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT.

Saltwater intrusion is likely to accelerate as climate change begins to take effect. One of the major effects of climate change is an anticipated rise in sea level with current estimates (Department of the Environment 2014) predicting sea levels could rise by nearly 1 meter by 2100 with a corresponding loss of coastal floodplain systems and wetland habitat. These calculations do not take into account other anticipated and compounding changes such as further saltwater intrusion or changes in hydrology and in weed and feral animal distributions, increased temperature and reduced access as roads become inundated. Future saltwater control, conservation activities in priority areas and adaptive access options will be determined in consultation with the Traditional Owners.

#### Aims

- Protecting and maintaining natural values of national and international significance including wetlands / floodplains, high species richness, wildlife aggregations, habitat diversity, and species of conservation significance.
- Incorporating Indigenous knowledge into park operations wherever practicable and managing the park to the satisfaction of the partners.

#### Management Actions

11. **Integrated Conservation Strategy** – A planning team comprised of the park manager, a nominee of the MRJMC, scientists, stakeholders and a planner will prepare a five year Integrated Conservation Strategy for the park, focusing on park values and threats and monitoring health and outputs. As part of the strategy a long-term environmental monitoring program of the park's most important wildlife values, including waterfowl, will be established. (*High*)
12. **Datasets** – Maintain data relating to inputs and outputs for threat abatement programs (weeds, feral animals, fire) to inform decision-making and using the best technology and methods available to the Parks and Wildlife Commission. (*High*)
13. **Operational plans** – The MRJMC will endorse the five year Integrated Conservation Strategy and annual action plans for conservation / threat abatement programs. Particular attention will be given to specific high value sites including floodplains, rainforest patches and grasslands. (*High*)
14. **Community liaison** – In conjunction with Northern Territory Government experts, liaise with the wider community, neighbouring landowners and adjoining Indigenous communities to complement management activities on park, for assistance with managing the many separate portions of the park, and to increase awareness of land management issues related to weeds, feral animals and fire. (*High*)
15. **Weed management** – Management of weeds will continue to take a strategic approach through implementation of the Integrated Conservation Strategy (MA 11) and the annually-reviewed action plan. Weed control processes will be developed in conjunction with, and using the standards developed by Northern Territory Government experts, to ensure that park operations comply with the *Weeds Management Act*, including all associated statutory management plans. (*High*)

Weed management will focus on practical control methods, practices to minimise the number of weeds being brought into the park, effective survey and monitoring, and will incorporate the concerns of the Traditional Owners. Weed management will concentrate on the following:

- Control olive hymenachne, mimosa, gamba grass and mission grass in priority order as advised by the Weed Management Branch of the Department of Land Resource Management, or other relevant government agency;
- Ongoing surveillance and mapping for high-risk weeds during park patrols. Assess new weed incursions against legislative and statutory requirements, regional priorities and the current park priority list before taking any action or altering existing priorities;
- Mitigate weed spread by enforcing use of weed-free / clean equipment when undertaking development

on-park and implement other best practice quarantine procedures for park rangers and equipment; and

- Collect and map weed location data to monitor weed distribution and the effectiveness of weed control.
16. **Feral animal control** – Management of feral animals will be strategically managed through implementation of the Integrated Conservation Strategy (MA 11) and the annually-reviewed action plan. (*High*)

Feral animal management will concentrate in priority order on the following:

- Control pigs and buffalo particularly in rainforest patches and in sensitive riparian areas;
- Maintain existing fences and install new fences in key locations including the south-eastern corner of the McKinlay sector; and
- Liaise with neighbours to maintain fences and to muster straying stock out of the park at the end of the Wet season and as necessary at other times of the year.

17. **Fire management** – Fire will be strategically managed through implementation of the Integrated Conservation Strategy (MA 11) and the annually-reviewed action plan. (*High*)

Fire management will concentrate in priority order on the following:

- Protect people, personal property, infrastructure and cultural sites from fire;
- Protect the riverine corridor and riparian forests from hot fires through active management in the early Dry season;
- Prevent fires from entering or exiting the park and limit areas of the park burnt through reducing fuel, maintaining firebreaks and protectively burning around high-value habitat;
- Strategically mosaic burn in the early Dry season with patches preferably less than 2 ha. Ensure fires occur less than once every 5 years in savanna communities and less than once every 10 years in woodland habitats;
- Reduce fuel loads by spraying, slashing, (pre and post Wet season) or burning invasive grasses (late Wet season);
- Restrict open campfires within the Visitor Zone to designated fireplaces. In other zones, campfires may be permitted subject to conditions that minimise the impact and risk of uncontrolled fire; and
- Involve the park's neighbours and consider their interests.

#### Performance Measures

- Datasets maintained and information used to inform forward planning and adaptive management.
- Increasing communication and involvement with neighbouring landowners and communities.
- Annual operational action plans implemented with high priority actions and targets achieved.
- Coastal and floodplain systems in good condition.

## 4. Cultural Values



*Plate 10: Traditional Owners spending time together to discuss business*

### 4.1 Continuing Connection and Use

Continuing use of country and its resources is a core right and responsibility for Traditional Owners and one of the most important ways that Traditional Owners maintain and manage country. “Country has nourished the passing generations of Traditional Owner families over the thousands of years that people have occupied this land. To truly belong to country it is important to take food from it. Both the process of gathering food and the actual consumption are important. Both make people one with country and with their ancestors” (Mearnes 2009). Nothing in the TPWC Act limits the right of Aboriginal people who have traditionally used an area of land or water from continuing to use that area in accordance with Aboriginal tradition for hunting, food gathering and for ceremonial and religious purposes. The senior men and women of the Mary River area still recall the range of foods that were collected from country including goose eggs, fish, turtle, ducks, water python, lilies, freshwater mussels, red apples, green plums and yams. This is an important and productive landscape for the Traditional Owners.

Long absences from country mean that there has been very little traditional hunting for many years. The partners support Traditional Owners in changing this in the future through the establishment of camping areas for use by the Limilngan People and the Uwynmil People. These camping areas will be used to support the ‘back to country’ program, aimed at facilitating transfer of cultural knowledge to younger generations and park rangers. These areas will be used for traditional hunting and as an opportunity for Traditional Owners to teach their children and grandchildren about country and traditional law.

Aboriginal people who have traditional rights within the park are permitted to hunt and gather on country for non-commercial purposes under section 122 of the TPWC Act. The partners agree that traditional hunting and gathering can be managed in a way that will not compromise visitor safety or wildlife conservation objectives of the park.

#### Indigenous Knowledge

The Traditional Owners aspire to a strong culture by continuing to transfer knowledge to the younger generation. Traditional Owners are particularly keen to share knowledge so that visitors and the



wider community better understand and appreciate the cultural significance of the Limilngan and Uwynmil traditional lands that form the park.



*Plate 11: Teaching the next generation about country helps keep culture strong*

Similarly, many visitors are very interested in Indigenous culture and the participation of Traditional Owners in the management of the park provides opportunities to increase the level of cultural information presented in the park. Traditional Owners will have the opportunity to actively participate in developing education and interpretation programs for the park.

It is also important to the Traditional Owners that other Indigenous people follow proper cultural protocols when accessing country and exercising traditional rights. This means that they may need to remind family about their obligations through promoting cultural protocols and imparting knowledge about appropriate behaviour. This can be addressed through an education program and at on country camps.

Traditional Owners sometimes provide information to researchers and their contribution must be appropriately acknowledged particularly in published works. Traditional Owners may expect to share in any benefit if this knowledge is used for commercial purposes. Benefit sharing arrangements are negotiated for the partners and Traditional Owners with the assistance of the Northern Land Council during permit assessment processes.

Intellectual property rights and Aboriginal cultural knowledge need to be appropriately recognised and acknowledged, and the recording, presentation and the transfer of traditional knowledge managed in line with the wishes of Traditional Owners. The Traditional Owners are best placed to direct these processes because they require appropriate cultural authority to be managed properly. The Northern Land Council may assist the Traditional Owners to manage their traditional knowledge. Programs aimed at collecting cultural information for the benefit of park management and future generations of Traditional Owners may also be developed. The control, management and transfer of information collected during these programs remain the responsibility of Traditional Owners.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission acknowledge that cultural knowledge belongs to the Traditional Owners and will not use or permit to be used such knowledge without prior consent of the Traditional Owners. Wherever possible, the Parks and Wildlife Commission will assist the Traditional Owners assert their intellectual property rights consistent with Parks and Wildlife Commission policy and intellectual property law.

## 4.2 Sites of Significance for Indigenous People

The Mary River floodplain is intersected by the travels of ancestral spiritual beings and signs of their presence are the many sacred sites located throughout the park. These pathways and sites are part of 'Dreamings' which belong to Limilngan and Uwynmil. The knowledge associated with these 'Dreamings' sites has many functions in Aboriginal culture including containing knowledge of traditional law which governs how people relate to country and the rules for caring for country.

Knowledge of sacred sites gives Limilngan and Uwynmil Traditional Owners authority under traditional law and is one of the most important ways they confirm and maintain their rights on country. For this reason they are concerned that these sites and the knowledge associated with them are properly managed.

Over 20 sacred sites have been documented and registered by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) in the park and many more have been recorded. These sites and places have spiritual, mythological and ritual significance to Traditional Owners and encompass the knowledge and cultural practices exercised in managing them. Some of this knowledge is open and can be communicated widely but other knowledge is sacred and can only be passed on to those with appropriate authority. The management of Aboriginal sites will be guided by the AAPA and the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* (NTASSA) (see section 6.6).

The Traditional Owners observe complex sets of protocols and traditions to manage sacred sites and cultural information. Regulations relating to sites, stories and information of cultural significance may be established and communicated. Some sites may require additional physical protection such as fencing and interpretation, especially where they are close to visitor facilities or in parts of the park regularly used. There are two sites that are of particular concern to Traditional Owners since they are located very close to access tracks and these tracks may need to be rerouted.

The many significant archaeological places belonging to Traditional Owners that have been identified in the park include burial and ceremonial places as well as shell middens, stone scatters and stone arrangements. Aboriginal archaeological places and objects in the Northern Territory are protected by the *Heritage Act 2011* (see section 6.6). The Traditional Owners recall practicing a rich ceremonial life in the Mary River area and the abundance of archaeological material suggests that the area sustained a large population and vibrant culture. Ceremonial activity may sometimes require the temporary closure of small sections of the park. Any temporary closure will not unduly affect visitor access to primary visitor areas.

## 4.3 European Historical Values

A number of sites associated with John McDouall Stuart's crossing of the Australian continent from south to north in 1862 can be found within Mary River National Park, including a memorial cairn at Stuart's Tree Historical Reserve. The expedition's purpose was to find a route for the Overland Telegraph Line which would connect Australia to the rest of the world. The Telegraph Line would ultimately open Central Australia to pastoralism and lead to a more permanent settlement in Northern Australia by non-Indigenous people. Significant Heritage places from the expeditions of John McDouall Stuart include:

- The Mary River Crossing - adjacent to the Arnhem Highway marks a significant transport route and crossing used by several historical figures including John McDouall Stuart whose party camped here.
- Shady Camp Billabong – a location where John McDouall Stuart camped on his journey.
- Stuart's Tree Historical Reserve and Point Stuart - marks the point where John McDouall Stuart finally reached the north coast of Australia. Originally, this site included a carved tree with



Stuart's name and date on it, however it has been burnt and a memorial has been constructed in its place.

These Heritage places may qualify for inclusion on the Northern Territory Heritage Register.

The more recent history associated with the early buffalo and crocodile industry is particularly important to Traditional Owners along with many non-Indigenous Australians.



*Plate 12: A number of historic sites associated with the explorer John McDouall Stuart are located within the park*

#### Aims

- Maintaining the park's cultural and historical values for future generations.
- People and park visitors respecting the park's cultural and historical values.
- Traditional Owners satisfied with their involvement, fulfilling cultural responsibilities and protecting sacred sites.
- Incorporating Indigenous knowledge into park operations wherever practicable and managing the park to the satisfaction of the Traditional Owners.

#### Management Actions

18. **Cultural heritage management** – The Parks and Wildlife Commission will include Traditional Owner cultural interests and aspirations into existing management activities wherever practicable. The partners and the Northern Land Council will work together to identify external resources in support of these cultural components where additional funding is required. (*High*)

Cultural heritage management will provide for:

- On-country activities which allow the partners to spend time on country together, recording knowledge and facilitating transfer of knowledge and skills between Traditional Owners, to the younger generation and to Parks and Wildlife Commission park rangers. Where there is sufficient interest these activities will occur annually;
- Traditional Owners documenting Indigenous knowledge and oral histories for the park. The outcomes of the program will contribute to improving both park operations programs and public interpretation; and
- Cross-cultural training – park-specific cultural training and welcome to country will be arranged for all new

park rangers through the MRJMC. These arrangements are to be made as soon as possible after a new park ranger has arrived at the park.

19. **Cultural Heritage Management Plan** – Led by the Northern Land Council, the partners will seek assistance from the Heritage Division of the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment, or other relevant government agency, to develop and implement a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the park, providing for Traditional Owner contemporary cultural interests, and historic / archaeological site assessment and conservation. Consult with specialists such as the AAPA on best practice information recording and management procedures. (*Moderate*)
20. **Aboriginal hunting and gathering** – The TPWC Act supports Traditional Owner use of the park’s resources. The partners will promote sustainable use and develop policy and guidelines as necessary to ensure hunting and gathering is consistent with visitor safety and does not compromise park values. (*Moderate*)
21. **Culturally sensitive areas** – The Parks and Wildlife Commission will uphold restrictions and guidelines for sacred sites or culturally sensitive areas of the park as directed by Traditional Owners and the AAPA, and ensure adequate consultation and communication with affected stakeholders. With consultation and amendment of this Plan, the partners may approve culturally sensitive places as Special Protection Zones. (*Ongoing*)
22. **Aboriginal cultural business** – Traditional Owners’ advice on their customary obligations including ceremonial activity, their need to access country, and maintaining traditions will be respected and it is acknowledged that men’s and women’s sites may require different management. Adequate public notice will be given if public access will be affected by ceremonial activity. (*Ongoing*)
23. **Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property** – Traditional Owners will maintain ownership and control of their cultural and intellectual property consistent with intellectual property law as well as any policy and guidelines agreed by the Northern Land Council and the Parks and Wildlife Commission. (*Ongoing*)
24. **Archaeological and Heritage place assessment** – Places will be properly documented, assessed and conserved for their heritage value and their significance to relevant Traditional Owners where appropriate. The Burra Charter principles and processes will guide assessments and Northern Territory Heritage Officers will be consulted on any proposed works at Heritage places. (*Ongoing*)
25. **Northern Territory Heritage Register** – Where appropriate, places or objects can be nominated to the Northern Territory Heritage Register and declared under the *Heritage Act 2011*. During the life of this Plan, Mary River Crossing, Shady Camp Billabong, and Stuart’s Tree memorial will be assessed for registering on the Northern Territory Heritage Register using the expertise within the Heritage Division of the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment, or other relevant government agency. (*Moderate*)
26. **Archaeological and Heritage place conservation** – Advice will be sought from Northern Territory Heritage Officers regarding the most appropriate protection and conservation works. Ideally, conservation works will only occur in accordance with the Cultural Heritage Management Plan. Training in Heritage place management, such as rock art conservation techniques, will be sought for Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Commission staff. (*Ongoing*)

#### Performance Measures

- Cultural Heritage Management Plan developed, regularly reviewed and the partners satisfied with its implementation.
- The partners are satisfied that Aboriginal skills and knowledge of country are being integrated into day-to-day park management wherever practicable.

## 5. Visitor Values

The spectacular wetland landscapes and abundant wildlife found in Mary River National Park offer extraordinary wildlife viewing and recreational fishing opportunities. The park attracts locals and visitors from all around Australia and the world.



*Plate 13: Sightseeing on the Mary River*  
Photo courtesy Tourism NT

The recreation and tourism values of Mary River National Park are important to the economy of the Northern Territory. Experiences in the park are mostly focussed on wildlife viewing, fishing and boating on the floodplains, billabongs and waterways. Visitor numbers are consistently highest at Shady Camp and in 2013 approximately 17,000 people visited this site. While interstate and international visitor numbers are significant, local visitation has increased in recent years with a large number of locals passing through the park to fish the Mary River. The most popular activities in the park include fishing, wildlife viewing, photography, four wheel driving, walking and boating. Around half of all visitors spend between two and four hours within the park.

Current visitor sites within Mary River National Park are Bird Billabong, Mary River Billabong, the Hardies Four Wheel Drive Track, Mary River Crossing, Couzens Lookout, Rockhole, Wildman Four Wheel Drive Track, Brian Creek Monsoon Forest, Mistake Billabong, Jimmy's Creek Monsoon Forest, Shady Camp, Point Stuart Coastal Reserve and Stuart's Tree (see Map 2). Facilities and activities available at each site are shown in Table 4. Shady Camp, Rockhole and Bird Billabong are the most visited sites, attracting a mixture of visitors for different experiences. International visitors most often visit one of these three sites and arrive as part of tour bus groups. Private tourism operators also use the park and provide nearby services and facilities for tourists.

### 5.1 Future Opportunities

The Parks and Wildlife Commission are in the process of preparing a Tourism and Recreation Masterplan (see section 6.6). In addition to a Masterplan there is the need for a visitor strategy for Mary River National Park. In consultation with all interested parties and key stakeholders, a strategy will be prepared providing focus and purpose for any future development within the park. The strategy will consider existing infrastructure and will outline opportunities and priorities for tourism related activities within the park. Visitor experiences, products and services, future options for commercial access and infrastructure requirements to deliver on experiences will also be considered

within the strategy.

Some of the opportunities to be explored in detail within the visitor strategy include:

- Updating and expanding the interpretive information available and consulting with Traditional Owners to include further cultural content in new and updated information;
- Upgrading or relocating existing infrastructure;
- Construction of new four wheel drive tracks and camping sites;
- Safe river access and the creation of additional boat launching areas to the Mary River;
- Building new infrastructure, including all-weather accessible bird hides, elevated viewing platforms and elevated walkways beside floodplains and billabongs such as at Couzens Lookout and at Bird and Mary River Billabongs; and
- Night spotlighting tours (by foot or vehicle), fishing tours, walking tours and guided four wheel drive tours. Tours containing an integrated cultural component will be a key element to be considered.

**Table 4.** Summary of services, facilities and promoted activities available at visitor sites within Mary River National Park

	Information Pull-in Bay	Bird Billabong	Mary River Billabong	Mary River Crossing	McKinlay Sector	Couzens Lookout	Rockhole	Hardies 4WD Track	Wildman 4WD Track	Brian Creek Monsoon Forest	Mistake Billabong	Jimmy's Creek Monsoon Forest	Shady Camp	Point Stuart Coastal Reserve
Information on-site	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Camping sites						✓							✓	
Picnic facilities			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Toilets						✓	✓				✓		✓	
BBQs			✓	✓		✓							✓	
Wildlife viewing		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Walking tracks		✓						✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Lookouts		✓				✓					✓		✓	
Fishing				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
Boating				✓			✓	✓					✓	
Boat Ramps				✓			✓	✓					✓	
4WD Driving								✓	✓					
Commercial Tours							✓	✓					✓	

## 5.2 Recreational Fishing

All wetland areas of the park are open for recreational fishing. This includes rivers which are bounded by the park. The Mary River and Shady Camp Billabong are known nationally by recreational fishers for the chance to catch a large barramundi. The runoff and opening of the saltwater section of the Mary River attract large numbers of fishermen to the park, while many locals use the area year round for fishing. There are a number of boat launching sites within and adjacent to the park. Boat launching sites within the Park include Rockhole, Mary River Crossing, Shady Camp and along the Hardies Four Wheel Drive Track at Delta Block East and Delta Block West Boat Ramps, while at Point Stuart there is a privately leased boat ramp. The Corroboree Billabong and Hardies Lagoon Boat Ramps are outside the park, as is the access road to the Shady Camp Boat Ramps. Rockhole, Mary River Crossing and Shady Camp can become overcrowded during busy periods and additional opportunities to easily access the Mary River are being considered to prevent these issues in future. A number of commercial tour operators use the Mary River for fishing tours, usually launching from Shady Camp and Corroboree Billabong Boat Ramps, and a number of fishing competitions are held annually within the Mary River system.



*Plate 14: A prized catch of barramundi*  
Photo courtesy Tourism NT

Recreational fishing is regulated under the provisions of the *Fisheries Act* and the TPWC Act (see also section 6.5). Size and possession limits exist for some aquatic species in the Northern Territory and this is enforced by Fisheries Officers. Fishing in waterways within the park is regulated under the TPWC Act and By-laws and includes possession of nets, traps and spears being restricted to those with an approved permit (see section 6.6). Park rangers enforce the TPWC Act and By-laws.

The high water mark at the edge of the Mary River forms the parks boundary for some of the most popular sections of the park. Different landowners and tenures are located on the opposing bank along these sections of river. The Mary River runs directly through the Delta Block (NT Portion 4121) of Mary River National Park. This section of the river is managed by the Parks and Wildlife Commission, however the Mary River itself is a public waterway. The Parks and Wildlife Commission is responsible for boat ramps and other related infrastructure on park land. Infrastructure located along road reserves, such as the road into the Shady Camp portion (NT Portion 4063) of the park, is ultimately the responsibility of the Department of Transport, or other relevant government agency. At the time of writing, the Department of Infrastructure manage the contract for emptying the Shady Camp bins and any contracts to upgrade infrastructure such as roads and boat ramps.



### 5.3 Wildlife Viewing

The greatest range of wildlife can be seen from the water and depending on the time of year this is the best place to get a sense of the expansiveness of the Mary River floodplains. Purpose-built shelters for wildlife viewing are installed at Bird Billabong, Mistake Billabong and Shady Camp. Mistake Billabong and Bird Billabong are predominantly bird viewing areas and there is some scope to increase the amount of interpretive information about the natural values of these sites at the bird hides. The best site for viewing crocodiles in the park is at Shady Camp, however the access track to the viewing platform needs upgrading so that visitors do not have to walk through water when a section of the track becomes inundated in the Wet season.

Commercial boat tours showcasing the wetland wildlife currently operate under a permit at Rockhole within the park. A number of other commercial operators offer tours on the Mary River and associated billabongs. An increasing number of operators are launching tours from Corroboree Billabong and, although located off-park, it could become a growing concern for the park. Access to the river from Corroboree remains unregulated with launching as well as tours occurring in close proximity to the park (see section 6.8, MA 42).

There are few elevated sites within the park which allow visitors to experience the expansive nature of the Mary River floodplains without a boat. Opportunities to develop wildlife focused facilities and activities will be considered as part of the visitor strategy (see section 5.1). Possible facilities include an elevated viewing platform at Couzens Lookout, and elevated walkways and bird-hides beside floodplains. Wildlife activities such as localised night spotlighting tours, and wildlife focussed four wheel drive tours will also be considered. Wildman Wilderness Lodge conduct bush tucker and wildlife walking tours near the Lodge for Lodge guests, however there are opportunities for further walking tours to be conducted within other areas of the park for other park visitors.



*Plate 15: An elegant pair of Jabiru search for fish at Shady Camp*  
Photo courtesy Tourism NT

### 5.4 Four Wheel Driving

Mary River National Park is one of the few parks in the Northern Territory with access to the coast, where people can park their vehicles and walk to the shore. Access is seasonal and only by four wheel drive.

The major scenic drives in the park are along Hardies Four Wheel Drive Track and Wildman Four



Wheel Drive Track, both half day trips. The two tracks are joined by a section of the Rockhole Road and camping is provided between the two tracks at Couzens Lookout and Camping Area. Two boat access sites are available along the Hardies Four Wheel Drive Track at Delta Block East and Delta Block West with picnic tables available at Delta Block East. Access to each of the four wheel drive tracks is only during the Dry season when conditions permit, as both tracks cross black soil plains of the wetlands and are under water for long periods of time during the Wet season. Both tracks have had prolonged periods of closure in recent years, causing frustration amongst members of the public keen to access these scenic drives.

Visitors using the Hardies and Wildman tracks can experience a range of habitats in the park including floodplains, billabongs, woodlands and rainforests, and there are good opportunities to view wildlife. An information panel is available for visitors at the beginning of the Hardies Four Wheel Drive Track and two track specific fact sheets are also available for the public to download from the Parks and Wildlife Commission website. The Hardies Four Wheel Drive Track has been used by commercial tour operators in the past, however there are no operators at present. A cooperative management agreement with Annaburroo Station provides a four wheel drive corridor across the Station and between the Annaburroo Delta and Wildman River sections of the park. These tracks need careful management since they quickly become boggy after short periods of rain.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission and Four Wheel Drive (4WD) NT signed a three year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2013. The MOU is a formal agreement between the two parties to increase access to Mary River and Litchfield National Parks for 4WD NT club members. Access requires a permit (see section 6.6) and 4WD NT's members help to re-open and maintain the tracks. The agreement affords greater access to four wheel driving and camping opportunities within areas which have existing closed or overgrown tracks.

The need for more four wheel drive and camping opportunities within Mary River National Park will be investigated as part of the visitor strategy and in conjunction with relevant stakeholders (see section 5.1). The potential to open tracks within the McKinlay Sector of the park will be assessed for potential environmental and cultural site impacts before any development takes place.

## 5.5 Camping and Commercial Activities

Formalised camping areas with basic facilities exist at Couzens Lookout and Shady Camp. During the Dry season the campsite at Shady Camp is very popular and a camping fee is collected through an honesty system. There are a range of emerging issues at the campsite including overcrowding and visitors camping for extended periods. These issues will be addressed in the visitor strategy (see section 5.1). There is an opportunity to formally develop camping in the McKinlay Sector of the park through the creation of designated campgrounds, and to provide new access options.

Commercial accommodation available adjacent to the park ranges from luxurious eco-style lodges to simple powered and unpowered campsites. These commercial operations currently include Wildman Wilderness Lodge, Point Stuart Wilderness Lodge, Bamurru Plains, Stuart's Tree Fishing Camp, Mary River Wilderness Retreat and Caravan Park, Bark Hut Inn and Annaburroo Billabong. These businesses play a significant role in providing tourism experiences within the Top End and encourage visitation to the park.

Owned by a private operator, the Wildman Wilderness Lodge is located on freehold tenure which is surrounded by the Wildman River portion of the park. The Lodge offers luxury cabins and safari-style tent accommodation as well as boat cruises and four wheel driving, quad biking, fishing, sunset billabong and guided walking tours within the park under a concession permit. Some of the supporting service facilities for the lodge are on park land and operate under a commercial lease.

Point Stuart Wilderness Lodge is a privately owned and operated business located on private land

along the road to Jimmy's Creek Monsoon Forest. The lodge offers accommodation including lodge style and budget rooms along with camping, a bistro and swimming. Barramundi fishing safaris along with boat, wildlife and birding tours are available within the park and are conducted under a concession permit. Boats are also available for hire at Shady Camp. The Lodge commonly directs their visitors to other facilities and activities available within the park, such as the four wheel driving and walking tracks.

Bamurru Plains is an exclusive safari-style buffalo property which is located east of the Point Stuart Road. All activities on offer are provided within the bounds of the property, however with its close proximity to the park, self-driving visitors can visit the park on their way to their accommodation provider.

Stuart's Tree Fishing Camp is a commercially run accommodation camp which is located on private freehold land via the four wheel drive Point Stuart Road Corridor. The Point Stuart Boat Ramp is leased and managed by the Fishing Camp owners and can be used by others if a launching fee is paid.

Mary River Wilderness Retreat and Caravan Park is located at Mary River Crossing along the Arnhem Highway and is a privately owned eco-tourism property. A variety of accommodation options are available including deluxe and budget cabins along with powered and unpowered camping and caravan sites. Mary River Wilderness Retreat provides directions and information about the Mary River National Park to their guests.

The Bark Hut Inn is an iconic Northern Territory pub and roadhouse located halfway between Darwin and Kakadu National Park along the Arnhem Highway. A number of cabins, motel and budget rooms are available along with a bar, restaurant and fuel. The Inn commonly provides information and directions into Mary River National Park to those stopping at the Inn.

Annaburroo Billabong is located across the road from the Bark Hut Inn and provides accommodation and information to visitors interested in visiting the park. Various sized lodges and cabins, along with sites for tents and caravans, are available for guests.

Tours provide a more direct educational experience of Mary River National Park. At present fishing, wildlife, four wheel driving, quad bike, walking and commercial boat tours operate in the park. Opportunity exists to expand the number of tours available from different tour operators within the park and the visitor strategy will look at identifying these (see section 5.1). Tours are an area of particular interest to Traditional Owners as there is much scope for developing tours showcasing the cultural values of the park. Traditional Owners may work in partnership with existing tour operators or new commercial enterprises.

## 5.6 Visitor Information and Education

Information and interpretation plays an important role in visitor management by informing people about the values of the park and how visitors can respect them. Public education informs visitors about facilities, activities, safety aspects and regulations, and explains or interprets the park's cultural and natural features. Information is also used by local tour operators so they can access the park with their tour groups and so they can give accurate information to visitors utilising their services and facilities.

Interpretive information is currently available for the fourteen established visitor sites within the park (see Table 4) as either signs on-site or as downloadable information fact sheets from the Parks and Wildlife Commission website. Information can be classified as orientation information, which also includes information on safety and reducing visitor impacts; and educational information which can provide information on natural and cultural values in the park. There is scope to update and expand the interpretive information available, particularly to incorporate further cultural information from the Traditional Owners. An upgrade of the information at Rockhole has been planned while an

upgrade to the remainder of the park's information will be considered within the visitor strategy (see section 5.1). The partners would like to see more information about the significance of the park to Traditional Owners included in all interpretation. The Parks and Wildlife Commission produces interpretive materials for Northern Territory parks and is keen to receive recommendations from joint management groups for information upgrades.

Local tour operators would like to be kept well informed about the park, particularly when there are changes in access to visitor sites. The Parks and Wildlife Commission will keep an up-to-date list of local operator email addresses and emails will be sent when visitor sites are opened, closed and when there will be delayed site openings due to flooding, fires and other events. In addition, the Parks and Wildlife Commission's Mary River National Park access webpage and Facebook page will continue to be updated with the latest park access information.

## 5.7 Visitor Access

Entry to visitor sites within the park is from the Arnhem Highway and the Point Stuart Road off the Arnhem Highway. The Point Stuart Road is sealed from the Arnhem Highway to the Wildman Wilderness Lodge turnoff and is accessible all-year. From this point the road becomes a formed 2WD gravel road which can become corrugated, particularly late in the visitor season. On the southern edge of the Swim Creek portion (NT Portion 4433) of the park the Point Stuart Road becomes a four wheel drive track. The track is impassable during the Wet season and remains closed until conditions permit. The Point Stuart day use area, Stuart's Tree Fishing Camp and Finke Bay are accessed via this four wheel drive track and long closures have implications for local business and stations (see section 6.8 MA 41). See section 5.4 for information on access to the Hardies Four Wheel Drive Track and Wildman Four Wheel Drive Track.

Access to Shady Camp, Point Stuart Wilderness Lodge, Jimmy's Creek Monsoon Forest, Mistake Billabong, Brian Creek Monsoon Forest, Wildman Wilderness Lodge, Mary River Billabong and Bird Billabong are all by formed 2WD gravel roads. Access to Rockhole and Couzens Lookout is also via a formed 2WD gravel road, however access can be closed due to flooding.

The Department of Transport, or other relevant government agency, is responsible for maintaining all roads throughout the park and will be involved as a major stakeholder in the planning of any new roads or access within the park. The department ensures appropriate environmental management controls are implemented during road construction and maintenance activities in and adjacent to the park.

Additional access into the park for commercial tour operators will be considered as part of the visitor strategy (see section 5.1). Future access options in to the McKinlay Sector will also be explored by the joint management partners.

## 5.8 Visitor Safety

The Mary River floodplains with its numerous rivers, creeks and waterholes are a haven for estuarine (saltwater) crocodiles. The size of these water bodies varies considerably and there is a marked seasonal variation in flow, water levels and connections with other water bodies. Most of the water bodies are adjacent to, or connect directly or indirectly with the Mary River which contains the highest density of this species known anywhere in the world. There is a high likelihood that anyone undertaking activities on or near the water will interact with a crocodile.

Crocodile safety is extremely important in the park and the 'Estuarine (Saltwater) Crocodile Management Plan for Visitor Safety – Mary River National Park' will be followed at all times. In particular, to reduce the risks to park users:

- Swimming is not permitted in any water body within the park;
- Standing a minimum distance of five metres from the water's edge is recommended;
- Fish should be cleaned away from the water's edge;
- Vigilance is recommended when launching or retrieving boats;
- It is strongly recommended not to lean over the edge of a boat or stand on logs overhanging water;
- Report any dangerous crocodile behaviour to the Crocodile Management Team in Darwin; and
- Individual crocodiles exhibiting dangerous behaviour toward visitors will be removed.



*Plate 16: The parks waterways contain large numbers of estuarine (saltwater) crocodiles*

Whilst it is not possible to eliminate all risk to visitors, risk can be reduced if visitors are prepared for hazards, have realistic expectations and behave appropriately. Having a clear and current set of emergency response procedures, appropriately trained park rangers and adequate resources will help effectively manage any emergency incidents that arise.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission has an overarching Visitor Incident system, including an Emergency Response Policy & Procedures, which provides a basis on which to respond to emergencies. The Parks and Wildlife Commission also undertakes annual risk management assessments and specific risk mitigation activities are captured within operational plans. All incidents are reported centrally and the Parks and Wildlife Commission has a range of Work Health and Safety Hazard Reduction guidelines to which the park adheres.

During the Wet season access to the park can be restricted due to flood waters. The Parks and Wildlife Commission advise the public of any road closures (and subsequent re-openings) via media releases, the Parks and Wildlife Commissions park access webpage and Facebook page, and by physically preventing access to affected areas by closing and locking gates across affected roads. Local tour operators will be kept better informed of access changes in to the future (see section 5.6).

## 5.9 Waste Management

The management of rubbish and waste in the park is a concern. Rubbish bins are provided at a number of visitor sites within the park with the Parks and Wildlife Commission managing all bins other than those located within the road reserve running through the Shady Camp portion of the park. These bins are managed through a contract which at the time of writing is the responsibility of the Department of Infrastructure. Park rangers will stay vigilant for rubbish within the park. The

Department of Transport is to be contacted whenever waste issues arise within the road corridor. Rubbish collected from Parks and Wildlife Commission managed bins is disposed of in a land fill dump within the park. The volume of rubbish generated has increased over recent years.

The issue of waste disposal in parks and reserves in the Northern Territory will be addressed through the development of a Waste Management Policy which is identified for preparation by the Parks and Wildlife Commission.

#### Aims

- Increasing numbers of visitors using the park, enjoying high quality, safe and educational experiences.
- Realising new opportunities for visitor experiences leading to increasing visitor numbers and an increasing range of experiences available.

#### Management Actions

27. **Visitor safety** – All staff will be familiar with the Emergency Response Procedures and trained and prepared to implement them at all times. (*High*)
28. **Crocodile management** – Implement the ‘Estuarine (Saltwater) Crocodile Management Plan for Visitor Safety – Mary River National Park’ and review as required in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. (*High*)
29. **Visitor strategy** – A visitor strategy for Mary River National Park will be prepared by the partners in collaboration with Tourism NT and the Department of Business or other relevant government agencies, as well as other interested parties. The strategy will identify opportunities for all tourism related activities, facilities and information within the park and will be guided by Territory-wide policies and, when finalised, the Tourism and Recreation Masterplan. (*High*)
30. **Access** – Tracks and roads will be maintained for high quality visitor access and safety. Visitors will be encouraged to keep to vehicle and walking tracks to minimise damage to sensitive habitats and avoid risk of accidental entry into culturally sensitive areas. Access to the park, or areas within the park, may be restricted for environmental, cultural or safety reasons. (*High*)
31. **Pets** – Entry of pets into the park will be consistent with the Pets in Parks Policy. (*Ongoing*)
32. **Increased four wheel drive access** – Work with 4WD NT, as per the MOU, to reopen and maintain existing and overgrown tracks within the park. Consider additional opportunities for tracks within the park, particularly within the McKinlay Sector, and consult with all relevant stakeholders. (*High*)
33. **Tour operator updates** – Send email updates to all local tour operators when there are changes in access to visitor sites. (*High*)
34. **Visitor facility planning and future developments** – Visitor access, activities and facilities within the park will be managed and developed according to the zoning scheme (see Map 1) and the visitor strategy. The approval, design and construction of developments will be subject to appropriate site clearances, environmental assessments and agreed site development planning and be consistent with appropriate legislation. Investment in any proposed programs or works will be considered against Territory-wide priorities, budget availability, the visitor strategy and, when finalised, the Tourism and Recreation Masterplan. (*High*)
35. **Fisheries** - The partners will work cooperatively with the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries, or other relevant government agency, to manage fisheries in and adjacent to the park and will work with the Amateur Fishermen’s Association of the NT to investigate opportunities to improve fishing access where desirable and sustainable. Northern Territory possession and size limits apply within the park. (*Moderate*)
36. **Interpretation and community education** – A program will be developed for the park which will consider: community engagement, use of innovative media, cultural interpretation, safety and regulation, staff training and tour operator and tour guide support. (*Moderate*)



The interpretation and community education program will concentrate in priority order on the following:

- Additional signs are to be erected at key locations to warn visitors of hazards and provide regulatory information (e.g. 'no access' and 'no off-road driving' signage);
  - The partners will work with Tourism NT and other relevant agencies to ensure the park is marketed and promoted accurately and appropriately, consistent with the values and character of the park;
  - The Traditional Owners will ensure that all Indigenous cultural information shared with visitors is accurate and appropriate; and
  - Opportunities to provide park overview and /or orientation signage at key visitor nodes are to be explored in the visitor strategy. This includes assessing the suitability of providing for the development of a visitor orientation pull-in bay and rationalising existing signage at the junction of the Arnhem Highway and Point Stuart Road. Consultation during the early design phase along with final approval is required from the Department of Transport. Removal of the outdated visitor information pull-in bay at its existing location 10 km east of the Mary River will be part of this process.
37. **Visitor monitoring** – Following the review of the Parks and Wildlife Commission Visitor Monitoring Strategy, implement the visitor monitoring program for the park in accordance with the Parks and Wildlife Commission visitor monitoring standards. (*Moderate*)
38. **Waste management** – Implement the Waste Management Policy once it has been prepared. (*Moderate*)

#### Performance Measures

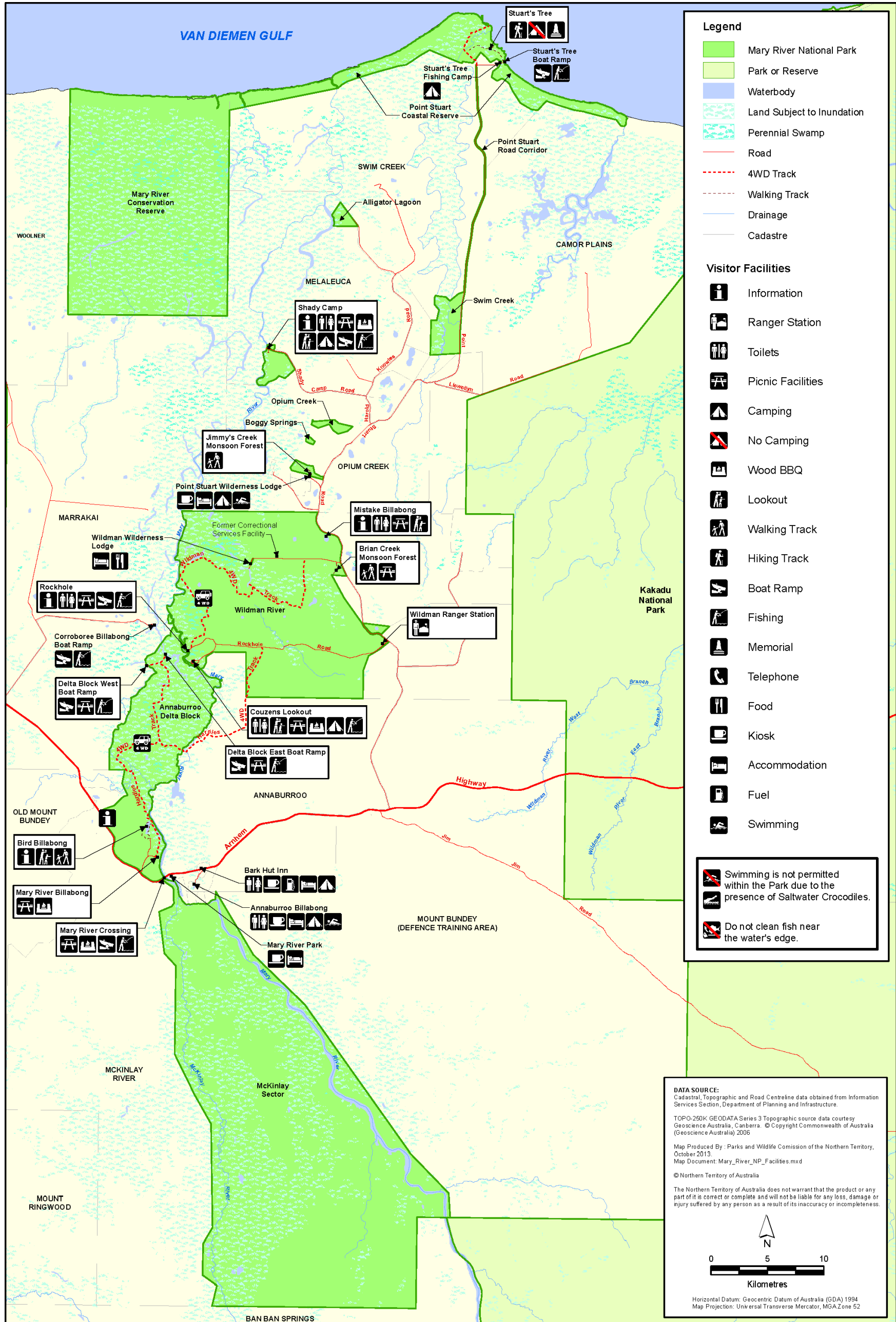
- Anecdotal evidence of visitor satisfaction with the park and its facilities.
- Annual audit of infrastructure and Repairs and Maintenance program completed.
- Implementation of the Crocodile Management Plan, Emergency Response Policy and Procedures and no preventable visitor accidents as a result of visiting the park.
- Increase in number of visitor opportunities and experiences available.
- Visitor numbers collected and reported to the partners.
- Appropriate cultural information is included in new educational information produced for the park.



Plate 17: Fishing the Mary River can be both thrilling and serene  
Photo courtesy Tourism NT



Map 2. Mary River National Park Visitor Facilities



## 6. Business Operations

### 6.1 General Administration

The Parks and Wildlife Commission is responsible for the daily management of the park and financing and resourcing the park's recurrent management programs including administrative, staffing, infrastructure and services. The park is managed by staff based largely at the Wildman River Ranger Station.

Overall management of the park is guided by a legislative and policy framework. For proper management of the park, and the safety of persons and property, it is essential that By-laws and regulations are in place and properly enforced.

Funding for managing and developing the park is sourced through the Northern Territory Government. Capital works and funded works programs are subject to Territory-wide government priorities. Therefore the budget for managing the park and the funding available for capital works and other programs must meet government priorities and is dependent on ongoing government and community support. Park and agency-wide priorities, performance indicators, monitoring, evaluation and reporting need to be integrated into the management cycle.

The MRJMC provides endorsement for the allocation of the annual park operational budget. The partners will support each other in sourcing additional funds for special projects that cannot be funded under the annual park budget.

#### Management Effectiveness Framework

The Management Effectiveness Framework informs priority, setting resource allocation across the Northern Territory parks and reserves system. Part of the framework establishes the relative importance of each park in the context of the park system by assessing each park's contribution to biodiversity conservation, and to recreation and tourism. It does not attempt to compare cultural values across the park system. The framework groups parks of similar importance and specifies general management standards to each group.

Mary River National Park is ranked as a Class 1 (most important) Biodiversity park and a Class 2 Visitor park. Class 1 Biodiversity parks require management of the Park to maintain and where possible improve landscape condition, and as a very high priority to manage threats at both the landscape scale and specific conservation values. All Class 1 parks for biodiversity have been identified as requiring 5 to 10 year Integrated Conservation Strategies (see section 3., MA 11). Class 2 Visitor parks should be promoted and managed as destinations of national / regional significance.

Mary River National Park will be subject to biennial performance reviews that look at each aspect of the business cycle. Results of the Integrated Conservation Strategy will feed into these performance reviews as will evaluation of the Performance Measures contained within this Plan. Results of the performance review will be reported through a park Report Card which will be made public.

### 6.2 Working with the Community

The park's stakeholders have a keen interest in how the park is managed and the future direction of the park. Key stakeholders include neighbours, the tourism industry, users of the park and community and recreational groups. Involvement of stakeholders in management of the park provides benefits for both the wider community and the park and it is important for the joint management partners to maintain support and working relationships with key stakeholders of the park.

Park neighbours are engaged in pastoralism, horticulture, mining, tourism, conservation and defence training. Neighbours face many of the same challenges in land management and have common interests in managing threats such as weeds and wildfire. Over the years the Parks and Wildlife Commission has built effective partnerships and relationships with neighbours and stakeholders of the park. They have worked together to coordinate weed and fire management activities and to discuss management issues. Given the fragmented nature of the park, maintaining relationships and collaborating with neighbours is an essential part of managing the park to maintain its current values.

Many tourism operators work on land surrounding the park and are interested in and make use of the tourism and recreation opportunities presented by the park. Working with these operators as well as the wider tourism industry will help see operator interests incorporated in the park's management, tourism and recreation managed sustainably and visitor experiences maintained to a high standard.

Mary River National Park is an important community asset. A number of community and recreational groups, such as the Amateur Fishermen's Association of the NT, NT Field and Game Association, Four Wheel Drive NT, Top End Orienteer and the Point Stuart Historic Society, use or are interested in using the park. It is important that groups such as these are given opportunities to voice their interests and provide feedback about the park.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission is committed to ensuring the whole community have a say in the development of the park. This has been achieved through meetings with stakeholders to discuss management of the park into the future. The wider community has been encouraged to make submissions on the Joint Management Plan while the draft format was available for public comment. In addition, the joint management partners will continue to consult the wider community in planning and decision-making for the park over the life of this Plan.

### 6.3 Indigenous Work and Business Opportunities

Joint management aims to help build sustainable livelihoods for Traditional Owners and their families through facilitating business and work opportunities for Traditional Owners in the park and elsewhere. Working on country is an opportunity for Traditional Owners to exercise their cultural obligations and responsibilities to look after country according to traditional laws.

Employment and training is an essential part of joint management. Traditional Owners see education, training and employment as essential for the next generation. Traditional Owners want their children to be employed and trained on the job in addition to receiving formal training. They acknowledge that ongoing support will be required, and that they have a responsibility to support their young people.

The broader employment aspirations of Traditional Owners and their families cannot be met by joint management alone. Consequently, any employment and training programs developed by the partners will need to involve external groups and organisations. This may include other government departments, Indigenous ranger groups, commercial business and other stakeholders.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission is working at increasing recruitment and retention of Indigenous people in the agency and are fostering the career progression of Indigenous employees. The Parks and Wildlife Commission will make every effort to increase the employment of Indigenous people at Mary River National Park, in accordance with employment laws and policies in force in the Northern Territory. Traditional Owners who are employed as park rangers, trainees and school-based apprentices will need different types of support and assistance in the workplace, which can be achieved through a collaborative approach between the Parks and Wildlife Commission, schools, industry, education and training providers.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission will continue to offer flexible or periodic casual employment, to provide work experience and skills exchange and build positive working relationships between park rangers and

Traditional Owners. This approach can also pave the way for employment of Indigenous people in permanent positions with the Parks and Wildlife Commission and lend skills for enterprise such as an Indigenous community-based ranger groups or tourism business. Cultural training of park rangers by Traditional Owners is an example of this working arrangement.

There are considerable opportunities for Cultural tourism in the Park or on adjacent land. Given its proximity to Kakadu National Park and the growing interest and focus on Indigenous tourism generally, it is likely that demand for cultural tourism product in the area will increase.

### Contract Services

Repairs and maintenance of park facilities are usually outsourced to contractors. Contractors can be employed to clean campgrounds, repair and maintain visitor facilities, signs and fences as well as construct walking tracks. Traditional Owners and Indigenous businesses have an opportunity to tender for these contracts. To be contract-ready Indigenous operations need capacity – administrative and technical skills and equipment.

## 6.4 Areas for Community Living

Joint management agreements provide for Traditional Owners to live on and near parks so they might actively contribute to natural and cultural resource management. Many Traditional Owners for the park live away from their country and would like an area on country where they can stay whilst conducting their obligations to country. Sites for semi-permanent camping areas in both the north and south of the park for the respective Traditional Owners groups, Limilngan and Uwynmil, are being considered. Any areas proposed for community living, leases or expansion of the park will be considered by the partners with consultation and full consideration of the issues. Final decisions will require agreement by the partners. Areas for community living and leases will be subject to the assessment of environmental impacts and any costs incurred for living area development will be financed through external funding.

## 6.5 Compliance and Legislation

The most common offences committed by visitors in Mary River National Park are illegal hunting, illegal access to closed areas, off-road driving, and bringing dogs into the park without a permit. These are offences under the TPWC Act and By-laws and people committing offences can be prosecuted and fined under the Act by park rangers and the police. To address these problems surveillance cameras have been installed and the partners are considering increasing patrols as well as other means to encourage compliance.

Fishing in Northern Territory water bodies, including within national parks, is regulated by the *Fisheries Act*. Only recreational fishing is allowed within the Mary River region and possession and size limits apply for some aquatic species (see section 5.2). Other regulations relating to methods for fishing and humane killing of fish are also outlined in the Act. The regulations of the *Fisheries Act* are enforced by authorised Fisheries Officers. The TPWC By-laws have provisions for fishing to be regulated within a park or reserve. Park rangers enforce these regulations.

### Hunting

Hunting in Northern Territory parks and reserves is regulated by the TPWC Act and By-laws. Although recreational hunting is not currently permitted within Mary River National Park options will be considered during the life of this Plan. The NT Field and Game Association have expressed an interest in working together with the partners to establish controlled hunting for Association members within a reserved portion of the park. The partners and the Association will meet to consider proposed options during the life of this

Plan.

The TPWC Act enables Traditional Owners and Aboriginals who have traditionally used the area in accordance with Aboriginal tradition to hunt, hold traditional ceremony and use the traditional natural resources of the park for traditional purposes (see section 4.1). The Joint Management partners can, by agreement, place restrictions on traditional hunting for safety and conservation reasons. The *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) also supports traditional use of the park. The partners will determine how traditional hunting rights on the park will be exercised.

## 6.6 Special Activities and Development

Commercial enterprises, or any activities involving special access or use of any part of the park, require a permit issued under the TPWC By-laws. This includes activities related to research (see section 6.7), public gatherings and events, aircraft operation and commercial enterprises including commercial tours, filming and photography and commercial sustainable use of wildlife. Permit conditions are imposed which permit holders must abide by to ensure safety standards and to minimise negative impacts on the values of the park and on other park users. Some permits may require supervision by Traditional Owners or park rangers and a fee may be payable. Additionally, where a secure form of land tenure is needed for the occupation or specific use of an area, for example by a tourism enterprise, a licence or lease may be considered, subject to the terms of the ILUA and any applicable laws.

The MRJMC is responsible for developing practical local guidelines to direct the process for permit approvals for the park. An initial set of agreed guidelines have been developed by the partners (see Table 5). These guidelines will continue to be refined by the MRJMC. Along with these guidelines and the authority provided by the TPWC By-laws, the interests of the park and partnership, stakeholders and the wider community, as well as existing Parks and Wildlife Commission policy and procedures are taken in to consideration when assessing permit applications.

**Table 5.** Mary River National Park Permit Guidelines

Permit Type	Decisions of the Joint Management Committee for Mary River National Park
Large Scale Commercial Film (By-Law 13)	MRJMC approval; Traditional Owner and PWCNT supervision required
Small Commercial Film / Commercial photography (By-Law 13)	Visitor zone (public areas): Low or high budget - MRJMC permit delegates to be consulted; Decision made within 2 weeks Off track: MRJMC approval; Traditional Owner supervision may be required
Promotional Film / Photography (By-Law 13)	Visitor zone (public areas): Park ranger approval; Images not to be used for company logo Off track: MRJMC approval; Traditional Owner supervision may be required
Activities Related to Research (By-Law 17)	New: Permit checked by DLRM or other relevant government agency, ensure ethics committee approval and legitimate research; Detailed map of proposed area of research required; Permit sent to PWCNT, then MRJMC for approval; Traditional Owner involvement and acknowledgement may be required; Return of information and research results to MRJMC Renewal: MRJMC permit delegates to be consulted; Check applicant has abided by permit conditions in the past
Camping & Bushwalker (By-Law 8)	MRJMC permit delegates to be consulted; Applicant information required includes detailed map of proposed route and camping sites, number of people and vehicles; Decision made within 1 week;
Minor Concession (By-Law 13)	MRJMC permit delegates to be consulted
Major Concession (By-Law 13)	MRJMC approval
General permit applications	Permits involving approved activities, requiring no special access, that are low impact and in keeping with Traditional Owner responsibilities can be approved by PWCNT staff



## Tour Operator Permits

Tour operators can have a strong influence on visitors' experiences of the park. All commercial tourism operators visiting standard visitor areas within Northern Territory parks require a permit under the Parks and Wildlife Commission *Tour Operator Permit System*. The Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Commission want visitor information given by tour operators to be accurate and appropriate. The *Tour Operator Permit System* provides a means for the partners to better liaise with tour operators and monitor the activities of tour groups. It also fosters opportunities for the development of cultural tourism products and the employment of Traditional Owners.

## Development Proposals – Leases and Licences

During the life of this Plan the partners will likely be asked to consider commercial proposals to develop infrastructure within or adjacent to the park as well as proposals to lease or license the use of part of the park. Any commercial development or licence or lease entered into by the Northern Territory Government in respect of the park must be consistent with the terms of the Indigenous Land Use Agreement and must have the informed consent of Traditional Owners. Such developments, licences and leases will present significant opportunities for business partnerships with the Traditional Owners and will result in benefits for visitors, local economies and expanded park services. Such proposals will be supported and encouraged wherever possible.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission develops, implements and reviews processes and policy, in accordance with changes to State and Territory government policy, that facilitates commercial and infrastructure developments in Northern Territory parks and reserves. The 2013 Commercial Tourism Development Policy, prepared by the Parks and Wildlife Commission in conjunction with Tourism NT, provides principles for the facilitation of the development of privately developed and operated tourism infrastructure in Northern Territory parks and reserves. Until replaced by new processes or policy, the Commercial Tourism Development Policy provides guidance to the partners for any major proposals or new works within the park. Assessment of development proposals will consider the potential impacts on park values and will be consistent with this Plan as well as Northern Territory and Commonwealth legislation.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission is developing a Tourism and Recreation Masterplan for the Northern Territory park estate (see section 5.1). This document will identify opportunities for new or enhanced experiences primarily across the top 20 parks in the estate. When finalised, direction provided by the Masterplan will be considered in any future development of the park and will help guide development of a visitor strategy for Mary River National Park (see section 5.1).

## Protecting Sacred Sites

Sites of cultural significance in the park must be protected and managed by law and this is afforded under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* (NTASSA), the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Cth) (ALRA) and the *Heritage Act 2011* (see section 4.2).

The NTASSA, administered by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA), protects sacred sites whether or not they are recorded or registered. Destruction, damage or disturbance to any site is an offence under this Act. An Authority Certificate will only be issued if the use or work on the land can proceed without there being a substantive risk of damage or interference with a sacred site or in the vicinity of the land or if an agreement is reached between the applicant and the custodians of the sacred site. Subject to the terms of the NTASSA, this protection enables the custodians of the sacred site to say who can enter the site and what can happen in or on the site. Successful joint management will ensure that sacred sites are protected in accordance with Traditional Owner responsibilities and the NTASSA, utilising advice from the Authority Certificate process of the AAPA.



## Protecting Heritage Places

The *Heritage Act 2011* provides protection for and conservation of prescribed archaeological places and objects (see section 4.2). Archaeological places and objects are not necessarily sacred sites and can include art sites, artefact scatters, quarries and scarred trees. A person wanting to carry out work on a heritage place or object must apply for approval through the Heritage Division of the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment, or other relevant government agency, to carry out those works in accordance with the process set out in the *Heritage Act*. The Act also provides protection for and conservation of declared heritage places and objects, including buildings, ruins, and old yards, as well as geological features, fossils and habitats. Importantly, sacred objects are not protected under NTASSA, but by the *Heritage Act 2011*.

## Long-term Agreements

Marrakai Station holds a licence to graze buffalo and cattle on the Mary River Conservation Reserve (NT Portion 2013) until 2020. The licensing agreement provides for management of flood plain habitats on Marrakai Station to protect magpie goose nesting habitat and obliges the licensee to control certain weeds. It also obliges the partners to consult the licensee regarding public use or access of this area. The partners will monitor the agreement and manage the relationship with the licensee through the Parks and Wildlife Commission. Future management of the Mary River Conservation Reserve will be considered by the partners prior to the expiry of the grazing licence. Options may include grazing, hunting, recreational fishing and tourism.

A cooperative management agreement has been signed with Annaburroo Station providing an access corridor across the Station and between the Annaburroo Delta and the Wildman River sections of the park.

## Mining

Several exploration licences have already been issued over large areas of the park and extractive mineral permits have been granted for sand extraction along parts of the Mary River and rock extraction in the Mount Bunday section of the Annaburroo Delta Block. A mineral title for white sand mining covers a small portion of the McKinlay Sector. Application for the exploration and mining of petroleum is of increasing interest within the region. At the time of writing petroleum exploration permits for areas adjacent and within a small portion of the park have been submitted. Geothermal tenure is also a potential future interest in the region however currently no tenure exists near the park. Applications for exploration and mining will likely continue to be lodged over areas of the park.

Three areas of the park have been declared as Reserved Land under the *Mineral Titles Act*, which means they are not generally available for mining. These areas include Stuart's Tree (RL 1118), part of the Mary River Conservation Reserve (RL 1234) and part of the McKinlay Sector (RL 1252). The partners may apply for more areas of Reserved Land in the future.

Northern Territory legislation allows for mining in parks and reserves but requires the Minister for Mines to consider the views of the partners prior to granting any mining interest. If the Minister for Mines decides to grant a mining interest, the Minister must include conditions recommended by the partners that are appropriate for the protection of the environment. The partner's recommendations must be given within four months of the partners being requested to provide their opinion.

## 6.7 Research and Monitoring

Most park research and monitoring programs are carried out as internal projects by the Parks and Wildlife Commission or by other departments of the Northern Territory Government. External projects are encouraged, particularly targeted research which might improve management, and where any impact on the

park's values is minimal. Activities associated with research, such as interfering with wildlife and taking, interfering or keeping protected wildlife requires a permit issued under the TPWC Act (see section 6.6). Current permit guidelines for the park (see Table 5) specify that the MRJMC will be involved in considering all new permit applications associated with research. For permit renewals, the Park and Wildlife Commission in consultation with a Traditional Owner delegate will approve permits if the applicant has abided by permit conditions. If a permit is approved, participation of Traditional Owner in the research project will be actively encouraged and the partners request acknowledgement and the return of information and research results. These will be conditions of any such permit. Traditional Owners' wealth of knowledge about the park may contribute to research projects, provided the researcher is aware that Traditional Owner cultural and intellectual property rights are protected. It is important for Traditional Owners to be consulted and invited to participate in research and monitoring projects and, where possible, employed in related activities.



*Plate 18: Park rangers conducting fauna surveys*

Monitoring visitor numbers, demographics, behaviour and satisfaction helps to guide visitor management, including planning and design of facilities. This data can also be useful to inform Traditional Owners interested in developing tourism enterprises. Traffic counters collect information on vehicle numbers and the Parks and Wildlife Commission will continue to collect visitor data from traffic counters located within the park. Visitor surveys ascertain visitor satisfaction, profile and use of the park and may target particular sites or experiences. Visitors will be surveyed by the Parks and Wildlife Commission, Tourism NT or other interested parties on an as needs basis.

The success of both joint management and park management will be measured against the performance measures contained within this Plan (see section 6.1). Each year during MRJMC meetings, achievement against the Aims of this Plan will be considered. Progress with management directions, performance measures and overall direction will be assessed. This assessment will determine whether the Plan requires revision or should continue in operation. Implementation of the joint management participatory monitoring and evaluation program will ensure joint management at Mary River National Park continues to be assessed and improved into the future.

## 6.8 Landscape Connectivity

It is highly desirable to connect the small isolated areas of the park together, especially when it increases the security of highly valued sites such as sacred sites or waterfowl breeding areas. Opportunities to enhance the park's conservation viability by expanding the park or by entering into agreements covering landscape-scale

conservation with neighbouring landholders in the region will continue to be explored, including options for corridors between Mary and Kakadu national parks.

Alternatively the contribution of the smaller isolated parts of the park should be re-assessed to ensure that their initial values are still valuable and viable and whether they should be retained. An example is the Point Stuart Road corridor (NT Portion 4111) which is an unusual portion of land to be managed by the Parks and Wildlife Commission (see also section 5.7). At present the road corridor contains a four wheel drive track, providing the only land access to Point Stuart Coastal Reserve, Stuart's Tree Historical Reserve (NT Portions 4435 and 971) and a number of private businesses and stations. The road could provide access to excellent late build-up and run-off recreational fishing sites however land access is currently unavailable during the Wet season. The Point Stuart Road corridor needs to be transformed into a road that is accessible for much of the year, as is the case with the southern portion of the Point Stuart Road. Ensuring solid Wet season access will benefit local business, station holders and recreational fishermen wishing to access Chambers and Finke Bays when fishing conditions are at an optimum. Negotiations are required between relevant government agencies such as the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment, the Department of Transport, the Department of Infrastructure and the Parks and Wildlife Commission, as a matter of priority.



Plate 19: The park is known for its extensive wetland and floodplain systems

#### Aims

- Traditional Owners meaningfully employed through Aboriginal employment and training programs.
- Effectively implementing this Joint Management Plan allowing for continuous improvements in park management.
- Supporting commercial operations and special activities subject to approval processes, policy and protection of the park's values.

#### Management Actions

39. **Budget** – The Parks and Wildlife Commission will develop operational plans and allocate resources to deliver these plans in consultation with Traditional Owners and with the endorsement of the MRJMC. (*Ongoing*)
40. **Community involvement** – The partners will consult with neighbours, the tourism industry and community and recreational groups in planning and decision-making for the park. Such groups will be invited to work strategically with the partners on conservation, recreation and tourism planning, to resolve common issues and develop opportunities, including those that are linked to the park but lie outside the boundary. (*Ongoing*)

41. **Point Stuart Road corridor** – Negotiate with relevant government agencies such as the Department of Lands Planning and the Environment, the Department of Transport and the Department of Infrastructure, to transform the Point Stuart Road into an all-year accessible road and to determine whether more appropriate tenure should apply to the Point Stuart Road Corridor (NT Portion 4111). (*High*)
42. **Linking landscapes** – Opportunities to connect the disparate sections of the park or enter into conservation agreements with neighbouring landholders will be explored and taken up when possible. (*Ongoing*)
43. **Development proposals** – Proposed activities and developments will be considered in line with relevant development processes and policy, the visitor strategy and, when finalised, the Tourism and Recreation Masterplan, and will be assessed in line with the scale of potential impact, consistent with Northern Territory and Commonwealth legislation. (*Ongoing*)
44. **Approving permits, activities and proposals** – The TPWC By-laws and the Mary River National Park Permit Guidelines (see Table 5) are used by the Permits Office and the MRJMC when assessing permit applications. The guidelines will continue to be refined by the MRJMC. (*Ongoing*)

In addition, the assessment of permits, activities and proposals will consider the following:

- Delegated Parks and Wildlife Commission staff can approve standard permit applications that involve an approved activity, require no special access, are low impact and in keeping with Traditional Owner responsibilities;
  - Activities or proposals that are culturally sensitive, large or complex, or part of a major commercial project will require full consideration by the partners before the application is considered by the full Traditional Owner group and where relevant and/or appropriate the AAPA;
  - The partners will consider applications if an activity or permit application involves special access or activities including infrastructure development and new research related permits;
  - Advice must be sought from the Northern Territory department responsible for heritage protection prior to any work involving significant land disturbance or infrastructure development; and
  - The partners, with assistance from the Northern Land Council, will decide if activities or proposals affecting a particular area of the park require additional input such as from a specific Traditional Owner.
45. **Permit conditions** – Compliance with permit, lease and license conditions will be monitored consistent with agreed policies and standard operating procedures. (*Ongoing*)
  46. **Hunting** – During the life of the Plan the joint management partners will look at potential options for hunting within the park. (*Moderate*)
  47. **Sacred site(s) management** – Traditional Owners are ultimately responsible for sacred sites, however a Cultural Heritage Management Plan will be developed for the park to provide Parks and Wildlife Commission staff with advice on restrictions and guidelines for sacred sites or culturally sensitive areas of the park and any site protection works required under the direction of Traditional Owners. (*Moderate*)
  48. **Sacred site clearances** – Sacred sites will be protected from damage from approved works on the park and authority certificates will be sought through the AAPA for any works that apply under the NTASSA. The Northern Land Council may provide advice to the partners regarding site protection and works clearances, and assist the partners with obtaining Authority Certificates. Management and protection of sacred sites will then be organised through the AAPA with the expressed wishes of the Traditional Owners. (*Ongoing*)
  49. **Works on Archaeological and Heritage places** – Any works or disturbance to declared Heritage places and objects and prescribed Aboriginal Archaeological places and objects in the park will require consultation and permissions in accordance with the *Heritage Act 2011*. Sacred site clearances through the AAPA will also be sought for works on any Archaeological sites on park. (*Ongoing*)
  50. **Indigenous employment and training** – Training and employment opportunities for Traditional Owners will be actively pursued by the partners. Opportunities for direct and flexible employment, contracts and training will be reviewed annually, together with Traditional Owners' interests and capacity. Agreed, achievable plans will be developed. Options to provide accredited training and business development support will be explored by the partners through collaboration with relevant government agencies, industry, education and training providers. (*High*)



Priorities for employment and training include:

- Opportunities for paid participation of Traditional Owners in park management programs will be maximised. This may include on-the-job training as well as accredited activities carried out by training organisations;
  - Traditional Owners will be paid for specialist cultural advice and supervision when required;
  - The Parks and Wildlife Commission will continue to provide opportunities for direct employment and training for Indigenous people;
  - Local Indigenous community-based rangers, community volunteers, and sponsored training and employment organisations will be encouraged and, where possible, invited to assist with park management; and
  - Indigenous rangers from other areas will be introduced to the MRJMC or delegated Traditional Owners before working on the park.
51. **Contract services** – Subject to the relevant laws in force in the Northern Territory, Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people, companies and organisations will be the preferred contract service providers where capacity to fulfil contract standards is demonstrated. Contractors who provide training and employment to Traditional Owners and other local Aboriginal people will also be regarded favourably. (*Ongoing*)
52. **Tourism enterprises** – Viable enterprises arising from Traditional Owners’ interests will continue to be encouraged. Appropriate support will be provided where possible and agencies such as the Northern Land Council will assist with developing ideas and identifying service providers to help with business plans, skills development and funding. (*Ongoing*)
53. **Partnerships and agreements** – Agencies and service providers who can assist with employment, training and enterprise development for Indigenous people will be invited by the joint management partners to provide support to local Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people. (*Ongoing*)
54. **Research and monitoring** – Park and Wildlife Commission staff will complete a biennial performance review for the park. Park Report Cards will be produced reporting on the condition of key values and recommending adaptive changes to management if appropriate. (*Ongoing*)
55. **Community living areas** – Proposals for new living areas on the park will be considered by the partners. The Northern Land Council will undertake Traditional Owner consultation and the precise location of living areas will be subject to assessment of the environmental impacts, Northern Territory Government policies, availability of external funding to finance development and joint management partner developed guidelines as required. (*Ongoing*)

#### Performance Measures

- Transparent processes including those for approving new developments and activities within the park are developed and operating smoothly.

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## Appendix 1. Priority Management Actions and Performance Measures

The management actions and performance measures from this Joint Management Plan have been collated for easy reference. The priority ratings are purely a guide and implementation of many of these actions is subject to the availability of resources.

Management Actions	Page Number	Priority
<b>Zoning</b>		
1. <b>Zoning</b> – The park will be managed in accordance with the zoning scheme. Regardless of the designated zone all management and development will have regard to maintaining the park’s natural character, its conservation values and visitor experiences.	6	Ongoing
2. <b>Isolated land parcels</b> – The value of some isolated land parcels within Mary River National Park will be assessed during the life of the Plan.	6	High
3. <b>New development</b> – Any new proposed development will be subject to consultation and permissions in accordance with legislated environmental, sacred site and heritage assessment processes.	6	Ongoing
4. <b>Changing the zoning scheme</b> – The partners will consult with other stakeholders and their concerns and ideas considered before major changes are made to the zoning scheme.	6	Ongoing
5. <b>Special protection zone</b> – To protect sites of exceptional cultural or conservation significance from threatening processes, special protection zones can be designated by the partners in consultation with stakeholders.	6	Ongoing
<b>Governance</b>		
6. <b>The partners</b> – The partners will meet at MRJMC meetings, Working Groups and on country camps as well as individually as required, allowing for a flexible approach to decision-making. MRJMC meetings are held at least once per year with the date and location agreed to by the members well in advance of the meeting. Traditional Owners involved in the Committee and Working Groups will be paid for their service consistent with the Parks and Wildlife Commission Fee for Service Policy.	13	Ongoing
7. <b>Supporting and building the partnership</b> – The Northern Land Council will represent and support Traditional Owners’ interests by aiding consultations and (if needed) resolving conflict. The partners and Northern Land Council recognise that joint management will be a process of continuous learning and growth. Governance support and training will be provided to the partners by the Northern Land Council and the Parks and Wildlife Commission focusing on the needs identified by the monitoring and evaluation program (Management Action [MA] 9). Disputes will be resolved according to the process outlined in section 2.1.	13	Ongoing
8. <b>Communication</b> – MRJMC members will be responsible for two-way communication with the wider Traditional Owner group, local community, key stakeholders (neighbours, commercial operators, recreational groups), operational staff and higher levels of government with support from the Northern Land Council as required.	13	Ongoing
9. <b>Monitoring and evaluation program</b> – A monitoring and evaluation program will be developed by the MRJMC to inform action for improved governance. Performance will be measured using indicators relating to satisfaction of the MRJMC members, effectiveness of the partnership and progress towards the longer-term aims stated in this Plan.	13	Moderate
10. <b>Dealing with proposals not in the Plan</b> – Any proposal not addressed in the Plan will be considered by the MRJMC. Any matter that may affect the interests of Traditional Owners will require the consent of affected Traditional Owners. Any environmental, sacred site or heritage matters will be assessed in accordance with relevant legislation.	13	Ongoing

Performance Measures		
➤ Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation Program instigated.	13	
➤ The partners are satisfied with the implementation of annual priorities and decision-sharing processes.	13	
➤ Achievements related to the longer-term aims stated in this Plan (culture, country and visitors).	13	
Natural Values		
11. <b>Integrated Conservation Strategy</b> – A planning team comprised of the park manager, a nominee of the MRJMC, scientists, stakeholders and a planner will prepare a five year Integrated Conservation Strategy for the park, focusing on park values and threats and monitoring health and outputs. As part of the strategy a long-term environmental monitoring program of the park’s most important wildlife values, including waterfowl, will be established.	20	High
12. <b>Datasets</b> – Maintain data relating to inputs and outputs for threat abatement programs (weeds, feral animals, fire) to inform decision-making and using the best technology and methods available to the Parks and Wildlife Commission.	20	High
13. <b>Operational plans</b> – The MRJMC will endorse the five year Integrated Conservation Strategy and annual action plans for conservation / threat abatement programs. Particular attention will be given to specific high value sites including floodplains, rainforest patches and grasslands.	20	High
14. <b>Community liaison</b> – In conjunction with Northern Territory Government experts, liaise with the wider community, neighbouring landowners and adjoining Indigenous communities to complement management activities on park, for assistance with managing the many separate portions of the park, and to increase awareness of land management issues related to weeds, feral animals and fire.	20	High
15. <b>Weed management</b> – Management of weeds will continue to take a strategic approach through implementation of the Integrated Conservation Strategy (MA 11) and the annually-reviewed action plan. Weed control processes will be developed in conjunction with, and using the standards developed by Northern Territory Government experts, to ensure that park operations comply with the <i>Weeds Management Act</i> , including all associated statutory management plans. Weed management will focus on practical control methods, practices to minimise the number of weeds being brought into the park, effective survey and monitoring, and will incorporate the concerns of the Traditional Owners. Weed management will concentrate on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control olive hymenachne, mimosa, gamba grass and mission grass in priority order as advised by the Weed Management Branch of the Department of Land Resource Management, or other relevant government agency;</li> <li>• Ongoing surveillance and mapping for high-risk weeds during park patrols. Assess new weed incursions against legislative and statutory requirements, regional priorities and the current park priority list before taking any action or altering existing priorities;</li> <li>• Mitigate weed spread by enforcing use of weed-free / clean equipment when undertaking development on-park and implement other best practice quarantine procedures for park rangers and equipment; and</li> <li>• Collect and map weed location data to monitor weed distribution and the effectiveness of weed control.</li> </ul>	20	High
16. <b>Feral animal control</b> – Management of feral animals will be strategically managed through implementation of the Integrated Conservation Strategy (MA 11) and the annually-reviewed action plan. Feral animal management will concentrate in priority order on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control pigs and buffalo particularly in rainforest patches and in sensitive riparian areas;</li> <li>• Maintain existing fences and install new fences in key locations including the south-eastern corner of the McKinlay sector; and</li> <li>• Liaise with neighbours to maintain fences and to muster straying stock out of the park at the end of the Wet season and as necessary at other times of the year.</li> </ul>	21	High

<p><b>17. Fire Management</b> – Fire will be strategically managed through implementation of the Integrated Conservation Strategy (MA 11) and the annually-reviewed action plan. Fire management will concentrate in priority order on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect people, personal property, infrastructure and cultural sites from fire;</li> <li>• Protect the riverine corridor and riparian forests from hot fires through active management in the early Dry season;</li> <li>• Prevent fires from entering or exiting the park and limit areas of the park burnt through reducing fuel, maintaining firebreaks and protectively burning around high-value habitat;</li> <li>• Strategically mosaic burn in the early Dry season with patches preferably less than 2 ha. Ensure fires occur less than once every 5 years in savanna communities and less than once every 10 years in woodland habitats;</li> <li>• Reduce fuel loads by spraying, slashing, (pre and post Wet season) or burning invasive grasses (late Wet season);</li> <li>• Restrict open campfires within the Visitor Zone to designated fireplaces. In other zones, campfires may be permitted subject to conditions that minimise the impact and risk of uncontrolled fire; and</li> <li>• Involve the park’s neighbours and consider their interests.</li> </ul>	21	High
<b>Performance Measures</b>		
➤ Datasets maintained and information used to inform forward planning and adaptive management.	21	
➤ Increasing communication and involvement with neighbouring landowners and communities.	21	
➤ Annual operational action plans implemented with high priority actions and targets achieved.	21	
➤ Coastal and floodplain systems in good condition.	21	
<b>Cultural Values</b>		
<p><b>18. Cultural heritage management</b> – The Parks and Wildlife Commission will include Traditional Owner cultural interests and aspirations into existing management activities wherever practicable. The partners and the Northern Land Council will work together to identify external resources in support of these cultural components where additional funding is required.</p> <p>Cultural heritage management will provide for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-country activities which allow the partners to spend time on country together, recording knowledge and facilitating transfer of knowledge and skills between Traditional Owners, to the younger generation and to Parks and Wildlife Commission park rangers. Where there is sufficient interest these activities will occur annually;</li> <li>• Traditional Owners documenting Indigenous knowledge and oral histories for the park. The outcomes of the program will contribute to improving both Park operations programs and public interpretation; and</li> <li>• Cross-cultural training – Park-specific cultural training and welcome to country will be arranged for all new park rangers through the MRJMC. These arrangements are to be made as soon as possible after a new park ranger has arrived at the park.</li> </ul>	25	High
<p><b>19. Cultural Heritage Management Plan</b> – Led by the Northern Land Council, the partners will seek assistance from the Heritage Division of the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment, or other relevant government agency, to develop and implement a Cultural Heritage Management Plan for the park, providing for Traditional Owner contemporary cultural interests, and historic / archaeological site assessment and conservation. Consult with specialists such as the AAPA on best practice information recording and management procedures.</p>	26	Moderate
<p><b>20. Aboriginal hunting and gathering</b> – The TPWC Act supports Traditional Owner use of the park’s resources. The partners will promote sustainable use and develop policy and guidelines as necessary to ensure hunting and gathering is consistent with visitor safety and does not compromise park values.</p>	26	Moderate
<p><b>21. Culturally sensitive areas</b> – The Parks and Wildlife Commission will uphold</p>	26	Ongoing

restrictions and guidelines for sacred sites or culturally sensitive areas of the park as directed by Traditional Owners and the AAPA, and ensure adequate consultation and communication with affected stakeholders. With consultation and amendment of this Plan, the partners may approve culturally sensitive places as Special Protection Zones.		
22. <b>Aboriginal cultural business</b> – Traditional Owners’ advice on their customary obligations including ceremonial activity, their need to access country, and maintaining traditions will be respected and it is acknowledged that men’s and women’s sites may require different management. Adequate public notice will be given if public access will be affected by ceremonial activity.	26	Ongoing
23. <b>Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property</b> – Traditional Owners will maintain ownership and control of their cultural and intellectual property consistent with intellectual property law as well as any policy and guidelines agreed by the Northern Land Council and the Parks and Wildlife Commission.	26	Ongoing
24. <b>Archaeological and Heritage place assessment</b> – Places will be properly documented, assessed and conserved for their heritage value and their significance to relevant Traditional Owners where appropriate. The Burra Charter principles and processes will guide assessments and Northern Territory Heritage Officers will be consulted on any proposed works at Heritage places.	26	Ongoing
25. <b>Northern Territory Heritage Register</b> – Where appropriate, places or objects can be nominated to the Northern Territory Heritage Register and declared under the <i>Heritage Act 2011</i> . During the life of this Plan, Mary River Crossing, Shady Camp Billabong, and Stuart’s Tree memorial will be assessed for registering on the Northern Territory Heritage Register using the expertise within the Heritage Division of the Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment, or other relevant government agency.	26	Moderate
26. <b>Archaeological and Heritage place conservation</b> – Advice will be sought from Northern Territory Heritage Officers regarding the most appropriate protection and conservation works. Ideally, conservation works will only occur in accordance with the Cultural Heritage Management Plan. Training in Heritage place management, such as rock art conservation techniques, will be sought for Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Commission staff.	26	Ongoing
<b>Performance Measures</b>		
➤ Cultural Heritage Management Plan developed, regularly reviewed and the partners satisfied with its implementation.	26	
➤ The partners are satisfied that Aboriginal skills and knowledge of country are being integrated into day-to-day park management wherever practicable.	26	
<b>Visitor Values</b>		
27. <b>Visitor safety</b> – All staff will be familiar with the Emergency Response Procedures and trained and prepared to implement them at all times.	35	High
28. <b>Crocodile management</b> – Implement the ‘Estuarine (Saltwater) Crocodile Management Plan for Visitor Safety – Mary River National Park’ and review as required in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.	35	High
29. <b>Visitor strategy</b> – A visitor strategy for Mary River National Park will be prepared by the partners in collaboration with Tourism NT and the Department of Business or other relevant government agencies, as well as other interested parties. The strategy will identify opportunities for all tourism related activities, facilities and information within the park and will be guided by Territory-wide policies and, when finalised, the Tourism and Recreation Masterplan.	35	High
30. <b>Access</b> – Tracks and roads will be maintained for high quality visitor access and safety. Visitors will be encouraged to keep to vehicle and walking tracks to minimise damage to sensitive habitats and avoid risk of accidental entry into culturally sensitive areas. Access to the park, or areas within the park, may be restricted for environmental, cultural or safety reasons.	35	High
31. <b>Pets</b> – Entry of pets into the park will be consistent with the Pets in Parks Policy.	35	Ongoing
32. <b>Increased four wheel drive access</b> – Work with 4WD NT, as per the MOU, to reopen and maintain existing and overgrown tracks within the park. Consider additional opportunities for tracks within the park, particularly within the McKinlay	35	High

Sector, and consult with all relevant stakeholders.		
<b>33. Tour operator updates</b> – Send email updates to all local tour operators when there are changes in access to visitor sites.	35	High
<b>34. Visitor facility planning and future developments</b> – Visitor access, activities and facilities within the park will be managed and developed according to the zoning scheme (see Map 1) and the visitor strategy. The approval, design and construction of developments will be subject to appropriate site clearances, environmental assessments and agreed site development planning and be consistent with appropriate legislation. Investment in any proposed programs or works will be considered against Territory-wide priorities, budget availability, the visitor strategy and, when finalised, the Tourism and Recreation Masterplan.	35	High
<b>35. Fisheries</b> – The partners will work cooperatively with the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries, or other relevant government agency, to manage fisheries in and adjacent to the park and will work with the Amateur Fishermen’s Association of the NT to investigate opportunities to improve fishing access where desirable and sustainable. Northern Territory possession and size limits apply within the park.	35	Moderate
<b>36. Interpretation and community education</b> – A program will be developed for the park which will consider: community engagement, use of innovative media, cultural interpretation, safety and regulation, staff training and tour operator and tour guide support. The interpretation and community education program will concentrate in priority order on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional signs are to be erected at key locations to warn visitors of hazards and provide regulatory information (e.g. ‘no access’ and ‘no off-road driving’ signage);</li> <li>• The partners will work with Tourism NT and other relevant agencies to ensure the park is marketed and promoted accurately and appropriately, consistent with the values and character of the park;</li> <li>• The Traditional Owners will ensure that all Indigenous cultural information shared with visitors is accurate and appropriate; and</li> <li>• Opportunities to provide park overview and /or orientation signage at key visitor nodes are to be explored in the visitor strategy. This includes assessing the suitability of providing for the development of a visitor orientation visitor pull-in bay and rationalising existing signage at the junction of the Arnhem Highway and Point Stuart Road. Consultation during the early design phase along with final approval is required from the Department of Transport. Removal of the outdated visitor information pull-in bay at its existing location 10 km east of the Mary River will be part of this process.</li> </ul>	35	Moderate
<b>37. Visitor monitoring</b> – Following the review of the Parks and Wildlife Commission Visitor Monitoring Strategy, implement the visitor monitoring program for the park in accordance with the Parks and Wildlife Commission visitor monitoring standards.	36	Moderate
<b>38. Waste management</b> – Implement the Waste Management Policy once it has been prepared.	36	Moderate
<b>Performance Measures</b>		
➤ Anecdotal evidence of visitor satisfaction with the park and its facilities.	36	
➤ Annual audit of infrastructure and Repairs and Maintenance program completed.	36	
➤ Implementation of the Crocodile Management Plan, Emergency Response Policy and Procedures and no preventable visitor accidents as a result of visiting the park.	36	
➤ Increase in number of visitor opportunities and experiences available.	36	
➤ Visitor numbers collected and reported to the partners.	36	
➤ Appropriate cultural information is included in new educational information produced for the park.	36	
<b>Business Operations</b>		
<b>39. Budget</b> – The Parks and Wildlife Commission will develop operational plans and allocate resources to deliver these plans in consultation with Traditional Owners and with the endorsement of the MRJMC.	45	Ongoing



40. <b>Community involvement</b> – The partners will consult with neighbours, the tourism industry and community and recreational groups in planning and decision-making for the park. Such groups will be invited to work strategically with the partners on conservation, recreation and tourism planning, to resolve common issues and develop opportunities, including those that are linked to the park but lie outside the boundary.	45	Ongoing
41. <b>Point Stuart Road corridor</b> – Negotiate with relevant government agencies such as the Department of Lands Planning and the Environment, the Department of Transport and the Department of Infrastructure to transform the Point Stuart Road into an all-year accessible road and to determine whether more appropriate tenure should apply to the Point Stuart Road Corridor (NT Portion 4111).	46	High
42. <b>Linking landscapes</b> – Opportunities to connect the disparate sections of the park or enter into conservation agreements with neighbouring landholders will be explored and taken up when possible.	46	Ongoing
43. <b>Development proposals</b> – Proposed activities and developments will be considered in line with relevant development processes and policy, the visitor strategy and, when finalised, the Tourism and Recreation Masterplan, and will be assessed in line with the scale of potential impact, consistent with Northern Territory and Commonwealth legislation.	46	Ongoing
44. <b>Approving permits, activities and proposals</b> – The TPWC By-laws and the Mary River National Park Permit Guidelines (see Table 5) are used by the Permits Office and the MRJMC when assessing permit applications. The guidelines will continue to be refined by the MRJMC. In addition, the assessment of permits, activities and proposals will consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegated Parks and Wildlife Commission staff can approve standard permit applications that involve an approved activity, require no special access, are low impact and in keeping with Traditional Owner responsibilities;</li> <li>• Activities or proposals that are culturally sensitive, large or complex, or part of a major commercial project will require full consideration by the partners before the application is considered by the full Traditional Owner group and where relevant and/or appropriate the AAPA;</li> <li>• The partners will consider applications if an activity or permit application involves special access or activities including infrastructure development and new research related permits;</li> <li>• Advice must be sought from the Northern Territory department responsible for heritage protection prior to any work involving significant land disturbance or infrastructure development; and</li> <li>• The partners, with assistance from the Northern Land Council, will decide if activities or proposals affecting a particular area of the park require additional input such as from a specific Traditional Owner.</li> </ul>	46	Ongoing
45. <b>Permit conditions</b> – Compliance with permit, lease and license conditions will be monitored consistent with agreed policies and standard operating procedures.	46	Ongoing
46. <b>Hunting</b> – During the life of the Plan the joint management partners will look at potential options for hunting within the park.	46	Moderate
47. <b>Sacred site(s) management</b> – Traditional Owners are ultimately responsible for sacred sites, however a Cultural Heritage Management Plan will be developed for the park to provide Parks and Wildlife Commission staff with advice on restrictions and guidelines for sacred sites or culturally sensitive areas of the park and any site protection works required under the direction of Traditional Owners.	46	Moderate
48. <b>Sacred site clearances</b> – Sacred sites will be protected from damage from approved works on the park and authority certificates will be sought through the AAPA for any works that apply under the NTASSA. The Northern Land Council may provide advice to the partners regarding site protection and works clearances, and assist the partners with obtaining Authority Certificates. Management and protection of sacred sites will then be organised through the AAPA with the expressed wishes of the Traditional Owners.	46	Ongoing
49. <b>Works on Archaeological and Heritage places</b> – Any works or disturbance to declared Heritage places and objects and prescribed Aboriginal Archaeological places and objects in the park will require consultation and permissions in accordance with the <i>Heritage Act 2011</i> . Sacred site clearances through the AAPA will also be sought	46	Ongoing

for works on any Archaeological sites on park.		
<p>50. <b>Indigenous employment and training</b> – Training and employment opportunities for Traditional Owners will be actively pursued by the partners. Opportunities for direct and flexible employment, contracts and training will be reviewed annually, together with Traditional Owners’ interests and capacity. Agreed, achievable plans will be developed. Options to provide accredited training and business development support will be explored by the partners through collaboration with relevant Government agencies, industry, education and training providers.</p> <p>Priorities for employment and training include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for paid participation of Traditional Owners in park management programs will be maximised. This may include on-the-job training as well as accredited activities carried out by training organisations;</li> <li>• Traditional Owners will be paid for specialist cultural advice and supervision when required;</li> <li>• The Parks and Wildlife Commission will continue to provide opportunities for direct employment and training for Indigenous people;</li> <li>• Local Indigenous community-based rangers, community volunteers, and sponsored training and employment organisations will be encouraged and, where possible, invited to assist with park management; and</li> <li>• Indigenous rangers from other areas will be introduced to the MRJMC or delegated Traditional Owners before working on the park.</li> </ul>	46	High
51. <b>Contract services</b> – Subject to the relevant laws in force in the Northern Territory, Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people, companies and organisations will be the preferred contract service providers where capacity to fulfil contract standards is demonstrated. Contractors who provide training and employment to Traditional Owners and other local Aboriginal people will also be regarded favourably.	47	Ongoing
52. <b>Tourism enterprises</b> – Viable enterprises arising from Traditional Owners’ interests will continue to be encouraged. Appropriate support will be provided where possible and agencies such as the Northern Land Council will assist with developing ideas and identifying service providers to help with business plans, skills development and funding.	47	Ongoing
53. <b>Partnerships and agreements</b> – Agencies and service providers who can assist with employment, training and enterprise development for Indigenous people will be invited by the joint management partners to provide support to local Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people.	47	Ongoing
54. <b>Research and monitoring</b> – Parks and Wildlife Commission staff will complete a biennial performance review for the park. Park Report Cards will be produced reporting on the condition of key values and recommending adaptive changes to management if appropriate.	47	Ongoing
55. <b>Community living areas</b> – Proposals for new living areas on the park will be considered by the partners. The Northern Land Council will undertake Traditional Owner consultation and the precise location of living areas will be subject to assessment of the environmental impacts, Northern Territory Government policies, availability of external funding to finance development and joint management partner developed guidelines as required.	47	Ongoing
<b>Performance Measures</b>		
➤ Transparent processes including those for approving new developments and activities within the park are developed and operating smoothly.	47	

**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ART GALLERY**

**NATIONAL REFERENCE GROUP**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Background**

The Northern Territory Government is investing \$100 million to celebrate and showcase the world-class art and cultural objects produced in communities across the Territory.

Across the Northern Territory there are more than 100 community art galleries, museums and keeping places that are home to incredible examples of Aboriginal art and craft. The Arts Trail will link and enhance these amazing places across the Northern Territory and position the NT as a leading cultural destination.

The centrepiece of the Arts Trail will be the development of an Iconic National Aboriginal Art Gallery in Alice Springs, towards which the Northern Territory Government has made a \$50 million down-payment on this facility and plans to leverage funding from the Federal Government and private sector. The Gallery will hold a globally significant Australia-wide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art collection from under one roof.

With construction planned to begin early 2020, the Gallery will showcase the richness of the world's oldest living culture as a place of pride, act as a drawcard for national and international visitors, and deliver social and economic benefits.

Further information is available at [www.artstrail.nt.gov.au](http://www.artstrail.nt.gov.au)

**1. Purpose**

The primary purpose of the Reference Group is to promote and inform the development of a National Aboriginal Art Gallery (the project) to be built in Alice Springs. The Reference Group will provide advice and recommendations to the Northern Territory Government on the Project's development, establishment and operations.

**2. Membership**

The Reference Group membership draws from government, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies and artist organisations, the arts and museums sector, and representative bodies including those that have expertise in Aboriginal tourism development, corporate fund-raising and philanthropy.

Reference Group members will be appointed by the Minister for Tourism and Culture. Appointment will be for an initial period of two years but may be extended at the Minister's discretion.

Members will be selected for their skills and expertise relevant to these Terms of Reference. The membership will include representatives of the Arrernte/ Aranda

Apmereke artweye (Traditional Owners) and Kwertengerle (Traditional Managers) of Mparntwe and its environs.

### **3. Role**

The Reference Group will provide advice and recommendations through the Department of Tourism and Culture (DTC) to the Minister for Tourism and Culture. This may relate to:

- development of the purpose and functions of the Gallery;
- establishment and operation of the Gallery;
- public programming, visitor experience and opening event;
- planning and development of the building design;
- legislation to establish the Gallery, functions, governance arrangements, accountability and reporting requirements;
- key policy development and implementation, such as curatorial policy and collection acquisition and management, workforce planning and enterprise development;
- advocacy and consultation and engagement with stakeholders, including with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak bodies and artist organisations, traditional owners and individuals - locally, Territory wide and nationally;
- promotion and marketing of the Gallery to position it as a national and international tourist destination, and linking it with Territory art centres and the broader Arts Trail;
- fostering and building relationships with galleries and cultural institutions with shared focus and purpose nationally and internationally, eg the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory – Telstra NATSIAA, Art Gallery of South Australia – Tarnanthi Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art, and Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa; and
- establishment and fostering of partnerships with the corporate and philanthropic sector.

### **4. Term**

The Reference Group shall sit for a period of two years from the date of its first meeting. The Term may be extended at the discretion of the Minister for Tourism and Culture.

### **5. Conflict of Interest**

Reference Group members will be required to sign and adhere to a Conflict of Interests/Private Interests Declaration form and be required subsequently to declare any potentially conflicting interest arising at any time.

### **6. Confidentiality**

Reference Group members will be required to sign a Confidentiality form and maintain strict confidentiality around all aspects of the project including the Reference Group's discussions and endeavours and recommendations to Government.

## **7. Code of Conduct**

Members of the Reference Group are expected to observe the following standards when dealing with Committee-related matters:

- a) Members should avoid any situation in which the private interests of themselves or of their immediate family, whether pecuniary or otherwise, conflict or might reasonably be thought to conflict with their Committee duty.
- b) Members should not use information obtained in the course of official duties to directly or indirectly gain a pecuniary or other advantage for themselves or for any other person.
- c) Members should not solicit or accept from any person any remuneration or benefit for the discharge of information not available to the public.
- d) Members should not solicit or accept any benefit, advantage or promise of further advantage, whether for themselves, their immediate family or any business concern or trust with which they are associated from persons who are in, or seek to be in, any contractual or special relationship with government.
- e) Members must take care to maintain the integrity and security of documents or information provided to them as members of the Committee. This includes protecting the integrity of electronic documents on mobile devices and laptops

## **8. Remuneration**

Members will be remunerated and all costs associated with travel will be covered.

Remuneration will be in line with the *Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act* approved classification.

## **9. Reporting**

Advice and recommendations from the Reference Group shall be delivered through the DTC to the Minister for Tourism and Culture within the period of the Group's term.

## **10. Meetings**

The Reference Group will meet not less than three times a year and the first meeting will be held in Alice Springs. Subsequent meetings may be held via video/teleconference at the discretion of the Chair.

## **11. Secretariat**

The Department of Tourism and Culture will provide Secretariat support to the Reference Group.

# Arts NT Register of Peers Handbook







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## Contact Arts NT

For more information on the Arts NT Register of Peers contact an Arts Broker at [arts.office@nt.gov.au](mailto:arts.office@nt.gov.au) or call 1800 678 237. For Grants Tracker technical support, please contact a Systems Officer on (08) 8999 8981.

### Darwin Office

Level 1  
9 Cavenagh Street  
Darwin NT 0800  
Telephone: (08) 8999 8981  
Facsimile: (08) 8999 8949

### Alice Springs Office

The Old Courthouse  
27 Hartley Street  
Alice Springs NT 0871  
Telephone: (08) 8951 5147  
Facsimile: (08) 8952 0446

### Postal Address

Arts NT  
GPO Box 1448  
Darwin NT 0801

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**Image Credits (from left to right):** Darwin Community Arts in Katherine with Tag Tool at the 2016 Junk Festival; Arrkanala Lyilhitjika performing at Desert Song Festival - image courtesy of Central Australian Singing Inc; At The Dakota receive the People's Choice Award at NT Song 2015 – image by Paz Tassone; Sietta performing at the Lighthouse at Darwin Festival – image by Elise Derwin; Mar Ann Butler's play Broken performed at Brown's Mart Arts Theatre – image by Glenn Campbell; 2016 Milpirri Kurdiji presented by the Walpiri People of Lajamanu and Tracks Dance – image by Peter Eve; Bush Bands Bash 2014 – image by Steven Pearce for Music NT; Desert Harmony Festival 2014 - Photos courtesy of Barkly Regional Arts' Media Mob; Darwin Festival 2014 – image by Elise Derwin.

Effective January 2018

## Introduction

[Arts NT](#) is a branch of the [Department of Tourism and Culture](#) that supports, develops and promotes the growth of the creative arts sector in the Northern Territory. Arts NT gives advice, develops partnerships and provides financial and infrastructure support for the arts.

Arts NT programs include the [Northern Territory Arts Grants Program](#) and the Australian Government's [Regional Arts Fund \(NT\)](#), which provide arts funding to artists, organisations and community members.

Peer assessment is fundamental to ensure funding is distributed in a fair and equitable process. Assessment panels are selected according to the type of initiative and the relevant community and arts sector experience required. Depending on the arts grants category, assessment panels may consist of peers drawn from the Arts NT Register of Peers only or may be a mixture of NT Government officials, industry representatives and peers drawn from the Arts NT Register of Peers.

The main objective for all arts grants assessment panels is to support proposals which demonstrate the greatest potential to enhance and develop the artistic and cultural life of the Northern Territory in line with Northern Territory Government policy priorities, in particular [Vibrant NT](#), the NT's arts and cultural policy.

Proposals may concern activities carried out by an individual, a group, or an organisation. Applications are assessed primarily on both the artistic merit and the benefit to the community and region.

While an application's artistic merit can be assessed in isolation from other factors, panels must collectively be confident that the proposed project is capable of being realised and that there are tangible benefits for the applicant, the arts sector and the broader community. The panel must ensure funding is spread across regions, art forms and demographics, including new and diverse applicants.

Peers may further be called on to participate in policy development, working parties and community consultation groups to provide advice and address arts and cultural opportunities.

## 1 The Role of the Arts NT Register of Peers

### 1.1 What is the register of peers?

The Arts NT Register of Peers is an approved group of arts professionals with arts industry and sector expertise, who assist government with specialist advice across art forms, regions, Aboriginal and multicultural development and arts management and represent the interest of artists and communities across the Northern Territory.

The current Arts NT Register of Peers has been approved by the Minister for Tourism and Culture for a three-year term until 2020.

The register is reviewed annually to maintain its currency and Arts NT will make recommendations once a year to the Minister of Tourism and Culture for the inclusion of additional members for a term until 2020.

Arts NT seeks to include peers who are knowledgeable and representative of the following areas:

- Artistic practice
- Arts management
- Aboriginal arts practice
- Multicultural diversity
- Disability
- Community development
- Youth
- Regional and remote locations

## 1.2 What is involved in being a peer?

Approved peers will be given an induction by Arts NT staff prior to participating in an assessment panel or working group. This includes signing a declaration with regard to confidentiality and conflict of interest.

Peers participating on a funding assessment panel will receive access to Arts NT's online grants management system Grants-Tracker to review applications and score them against the published assessment criteria. At any stage of the assessment process, peers must disclose any potential conflict of interest to ensure no favouritism and that decisions are based solely on artistic merit. Depending on the number of incoming grant applications, reading time may vary from two to three days plus one sitting day and peers will be given access two weeks prior to the assessment meeting.

Peers participating on a working group or community consultation group will be provided the relevant documentation and advice well in advance of the meeting.

During funding assessment meetings, peers contribute their knowledge, experience and expertise when assessing each project. The panel works collectively to discuss and rate each project, resulting in an agreed list of funding recommendations or advice to government. Panels consist of three to seven peers and meet face to face where possible or via videoconference. Generally, assessment meetings take no more than one day, but may include one or two travel days and are held in Darwin, Alice Springs or other regional centres in the NT.

The list of approved peers is extensive to ensure availability and flexibility when creating a panel and not all peers will receive an invitation to participate.

Peers are paid in accordance with the *Northern Territory of Australia Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act (Act)*. An excerpt attached at the end of the handbook.

### 1.2.1 Code of Conduct

Peers are expected to be:

- Honest and sincere when assessing grant applications
- Fair and impartial and not allow prejudice or bias to override their objectivity
- Free of any interest which may conflict their objectivity

Panel members will be required to abstain from discussion and decision-making, and be absent from the meeting room when any discussion or decision-making is taking place where there is a real or perceived conflict of interest.

### 1.2.2 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs when a panel member's decision-making is influenced by a private interest. It is important to avoid, as far as possible, any potential conflict of interest. The panel should show no favouritism and arts grants decisions should be based solely on merit.

Although it is impossible to list every circumstance giving rise to a possible conflict of interest, the following will serve as a guide to the occurrences that might cause conflicts of interest and that should be reported to the panel. Full disclosure of any situation in doubt should be made to permit an impartial and objective determination.

A panel member could have a conflict of interest if:

- they or a member of their immediate family have applied for a grant. (A panel member cannot be considered for a grant without the approval of the Chair);
- they or a member of their immediate family are employed by an organisation or individual applying for a grant;
- they or a member of their immediate family belongs to the board of an organisation applying for a grant; or
- they have previously discussed the details of an application or have been involved in the preparation of an application.

For the purposes of these guidelines, the definition of "immediate family" in relation to a panel member means the spouse, parent, brother, sister or child, and includes the child or parent of the panel member's spouse or de facto spouse.

Where a panel member is employed by an organisation which is the administering body for a grant but not the applicant, the potential conflict should be tabled.

Panel members are required to declare potential conflicts to the Chair. Other panel members also have responsibility for declaring a panel member to be in a position of potential conflict.

The Chair shall determine how to proceed. The ruling of the Chair may be challenged by a member of the panel and will then have to be settled by majority vote of the panel members. However, panel members will usually be required to abstain from discussion on their own applications or applications relating to an organisation with which they are associated.

Panel members will be expected to take an active interest in arts activity throughout the Territory, but cannot receive direct approaches with regard to applications for arts grants. Such approaches would need to be declared as a conflict of interest. A panel member may not receive monetary or other payments including gifts or favours.

Panel members may be involved in local arts activities to the extent that those activities do not conflict with the performance of the person's duties and responsibilities as a member of the panel.

A panel member shall not represent the panel in any outside activity unless agreed, in writing, by the Chair or Arts NT.

### 1.2.3 Confidentiality

Members of an assessment panel must treat any material they review and any discussion during the course of a formal panel meeting, as confidential. Panel members must not disclose any information acquired through the assessment.

Panel members will be required to sign a declaration with regard to confidentiality and conflict of interest prior to receiving applicant information.

## 1.3 How to become a peer?

If you are interested in nominating for the Arts NT Register of Peers and you are a current Northern Territory resident you need to show that you have:

- specialist expertise in one or more art forms
- work experience within an arts related profession, including marketing, production, arts management or arts administration
- an ability to participate in and contribute to panel processes.

You can nominate on [Grants-Tracker](#) by uploading your Curriculum Vitae (CV) and by nominating two referees. Where possible Arts NT encourages you to provide written references with your nomination.

If your nomination is successful and you are appointed as a peer you will receive further information including a declaration with regard to confidentiality and conflict of interest.

Any information about you that Arts NT is receiving in this nomination is to determine your suitability for the Arts NT Register of Peers. Arts NT will retain a copy of all nominations in accordance with s.57 of the Information Act. To assist in the promotion and development of culture and contemporary arts in the Northern Territory, Arts NT may share information from successful nominations with related Commonwealth, State and Territory Agencies, and local and national media. If you have any queries or wish to access the personal information, please contact Arts NT on (08) 8999 8981.



## 2 Assessment Meetings

### 2.1 Prior to the assessment meeting

After you have agreed to participate in an assessment panel and have signed the declaration with regard to confidentiality and conflict of interest you will receive a login for [Grants-Tracker](#) and given access to applications and support material for assessment approximately two weeks prior to the assessment meeting.

Arts NT will further provide you with a rating sheet.

Each member, in their preliminary assessments, considers the applications relevance to the category objectives and rates each application against each assessment criterion with a 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0 rating. In general panel members should consider the priority they would give to the application.

In determining 'artistic merit', support material accompanying applications is a critical factor in the decision-making process. The provision of adequate and relevant artistic support material by applicants is therefore essential in most cases.

If you have a conflict of interest with an application, you must indicate in the space provided on the ratings sheet. An average rating will be calculated from the remaining members' ratings for the particular application and added to the final score for each conflict of interest identified.

The ratings should be awarded according to the following guide:

5	Exceeds criterion/ benchmark
4	Confidently meets the criterion
3	Adequately meets the criterion
2	Some evidence of meeting criterion
1	Does not meet criterion
0	No evidence of meeting criterion
C	Conflict of interest.

Once the rating sheet is completed, it must be returned to Arts NT prior to the commencement of the meeting. All ratings will then be compiled, identifying each member's rating and the total score for each application.

Panel members should be prepared to discuss the artistic merit of each application which is crucial in forming a collective decision on what to support and why, and to what funding level.

The panel determines the final ranking of all projects allocating the total approved budget. Arts NT's approach is to 'fully fund' activities where applicable, to support successful project outcomes.

## 2.2 During the assessment meeting

Assessment meetings are held between 8.30am to 4.30pm (unless otherwise advised) in accordance with a meeting agenda. The time for the meeting will be estimated according to the number of applications received. The meeting location may vary to accommodate panel members attending from various regions.

It is not required that the panel follow strict meeting procedures (where motions are formally proposed and seconded), however the panel may choose to adopt such procedures if it so decides.

### 2.2.1 The role of the Chair

The Chair is nominated by Arts NT due to knowledge and expertise. It is the Chair's duty to preside at assessment meetings. A meeting will not proceed unless a agreed quorum of panel members including a chair is present.

The role of the Chair is to:

- preserve order and give all present a reasonable opportunity to express their views
- clarify or interpret issues that may be uncertain
- manage the group to reach the best conclusion or decision in the most efficient way possible that everyone understands and accepts (even though a minority of individuals may not necessarily agree with the decision).

It is intended that decisions will be reached on a consensus basis. It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that the collective will of the meeting is correctly determined.

### 2.2.2 The role of Arts NT

Arts NT reviews all submitted applications following the respective closing dates, determines eligibility and ensures that all the necessary information and support material has been provided. Ineligible applications will be advised within 10 working days of the close of the funding round.

Arts NT further determines the budget allocation for each category of funding in accordance with the approved budget for the Arts Grants Program.

Arts NT staff are present at all assessment meetings to:

- ensure time management
- ensure all applications are treated fairly and with due consideration by the panel
- ensure all information to each application (including support material) is readily accessible
- provide factual information, context and advice about applications where required or requested by the panel, such as advice on eligibility, track record of funding, record of communications with applicant and general advice relevant to the funding round

- clarify and provide information on any issues to do with government funding guidelines, policies and priorities
- provide secretariat support which includes recording the decisions of the panel and recording the feedback to be provided to the applicants
- note (in association with the Chair) any issues arising from the decision-making process.

Overall Arts NT staff keep comments to a minimum and only join in a discussion at the request of the Chair for a specific purpose such as to provide clarification on funding priorities or track record.

Arts NT staff do not have a role in debating the particular merits of applications, nor can they participate or unduly influence the decision-making process.

### 2.2.3 Discussing applications

It is important for panel members to voice their own opinions and to listen to the opinions of others.

It is also important to defend or argue against an application if you feel the discussion is not adequately taking into account all of the issues and knowledge available, however, a formal consensus is required for a final decision to be made.

In general, eligible applications will be ranked in accordance with the collective ratings. Applications which do not meet the minimum overall rating level required to receive funding, will not be discussed at length and feedback will be noted by the Arts NT staff. Discussion will only occur where a panel member has additional information or significant concern that an application will not receive funding.

Applications above the minimum overall rating level required to receive funding will be discussed according to their ratings and panel members will have the opportunity to amend their ratings if necessary. Arts NT staff will update the ratings as changes are required.

A formal consensus on funding decisions will be reached and recorded at the meeting. This decision will be consistent with the assessment criteria ratings to provide considered feedback to the applicant. This feedback also forms the basis for individual advice to applicants to strengthen future applications. Applicants are encouraged to obtain verbal feedback.

Any special conditions in relation to the grant, required by the panel, also need to be clearly identified and recorded.

Once consensus has been agreed by the panel, the final funding recommendations are signed off by the Chair. Arts NT then progresses the panel's funding recommendations including special conditions and feedback to the Minister for Tourism and Culture for approval.

## 2.3 After the assessment meeting

Peers participating in an Arts NT assessment panel or working party paid sitting fees and travel expenses in accordance with the *Northern Territory of Australia Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act (Act)*.

Payment will be arranged by Arts NT for attendance at meetings as follows:

- reading time and support material viewing time estimated by Arts NT will be paid in accordance with the attached extracts of the Act;
- sitting fees will be paid in accordance with the attached extracts of the Act;
- travelling allowance for panel members attending meetings away from their usual place of residence will be paid in accordance with the allowance for accommodation and meals for an overnight stay in the Territory for a public sector employee as determined by the Commissioner of Public Employment under the by-laws in force from time to time under the Public Sector Employment and Management Act; and
- travel and accommodation for panel members attending meetings away from their usual place of residence will be booked and paid for by Arts NT.

Arts NT will pay the agreed sitting fees on receipt of a tax invoice. Panel members may be required to complete a vendor form and Statement by Supplier if you have not received money from the Northern Territory Government previously or your banking details have changed. It is the responsibility of panel members to ensure their own individual tax obligations are met.

**Extract of Conditions relating to Sitting Fees**

(a) The daily rate is payable in respect of each day on which the member –

- (i) attends a meeting of the body;
- (ii) is engaged, with the prior approval of Arts NT, on the business of the body;
- (iii) travels to or from the member's place of living before or after such a meeting or in connection with such business, or is absent from their place of living because of such travel, where the total time so spent on that day exceeds 4 hours.

(b) The hourly rate is payable in respect of each day on which the member –

- (i) attends a meeting of the body;
- (ii) is engaged, with the prior approval of Arts NT, on the business of the body; or
- (iii) travels to or from the member's place of living, before or after such a meeting or in connection with such business, or is absent from their his place of living as a result of such travel, where the total time so spent on that day does not exceed 4 hours.

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**EXTRACT: CLAUSE 2**

Sitting fees are not paid to a member who is –

- a Judge;
- the Master of the Supreme Court
- a Magistrate;
- the Solicitor-General;
- a Chief Executive Officer as defined in section 3 (1) of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act*;
- a public sector employee;
- a person employed for the purposes of Tourism NT under the *Tourism NT Act*;
- an officer or employee of the Public Service of the Commonwealth or a State of another Territory;
- a member of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

Unless the member does not receive any salary in that capacity for the relevant period

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**EXTRACT: SCHEDULE 3**

A member not engaged in, associated with, or practising in, the business, profession, trade or calling of the body shall be paid remuneration at the following rates:

(a) where the member is the Chairman –

- (i) a daily rate of \$304; or
- (ii) hourly rate – pro rata

(b) in any other case –

- (i) a daily rate of \$228, or
- (ii) hourly rate - pro rata

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EXTRACT: SCHEDULE 4

ALLOWANCES

Travelling Allowance for members attending meetings away from their usual place of residence will be paid in accordance with the allowance for accommodation and meals for an overnight stay in the Territory for a public sector employee as determined by the Commissioner of Public Employment under the by-laws in force from time to time under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act* for each night the member is required to stay overnight in a place other than their place of living by reason of –

- a) the member's attendance at a meeting of a body;
- b) the member's engagement, with the prior approval of Arts NT, on the business of the body; or
- c) travelling to or from the member's place of living after or before such a meeting or in connection with such business.





## **Terms of Reference – Northern Territory History Grants Committee**

### **1. Overall objective**

The Northern Territory History Grants Committee undertakes assessment of applications for Northern Territory history grants and its recommendations are provided to the Minister for awarding grants to recipients.

### **2. Background**

The Northern Territory History Grants program was established by the Northern Territory Government to commemorate the attainment of self-government on 1 July 1978 and to encourage and support original research about Northern Territory history.

The Grants are administered by the Northern Territory Archives Service (NTAS) with single grants ranging from \$500 to \$7 000.

Grant applications are open to Northern Territory residents only including members of the public and community organisations. Territory, State and Federal government agencies and employees of the Northern Territory Archives Service are not eligible to apply.

### **3. Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of the Northern Territory History Grants Committee are:

- To assess Grant applications against set criteria
- To ensure Grant amounts recommended for awarding to recipients total the annual grant allocation for the Financial year
- To make recommendations of successful applications and recipients to receive a Grant

### **4. Membership and appointment**

The Northern Territory History Grants Committee is not a statutory body and positions are honorary. The Committee's membership will consist of three (3) members.

Committee members are representatives from the Northern Territory community who have expertise or extensive knowledge in the field of Northern Territory history.

Membership is a fixed term for three (3) years.

Recommendations of prospective nominees for new Committee members will be forwarded by NTAS to the Minister. New members of the Northern Territory History Grant Committee will be invited to the Committee by nomination of the Minister.

## **5. Remuneration**

There is no Sitting Fees for members of the Northern Territory History Grants Committee.

## **6. Administration**

The Director NTAS is the Executive Officer for the Committee providing secretariat functions and administration of the Grants.

## **7. Meetings**

The Northern Territory History Grants Committee meets once annually, following the closing of the Northern Territory History Grants application period.

Meetings are held with Committee members in Darwin in-person and/or by teleconference.

## **8. Reporting**

A record is kept of the Meeting date, attendance, summary of assessments undertaken, and actions.

The Director NTAS forwards the final assessment and recommendations endorsed by the Committee to the Minister for approval and awarding of Grants.

The Committee are advised of successful Grant recipients.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### *Northern Territory Library Community Reference Group*

The Northern Territory Library has two roles:

- To collect, grow and energise the knowledge of the Northern Territory for current and future generations; and
- To lead, develop and represent the library sector in the Northern Territory.

The Northern Territory Library is a public library, open to everyone, with a physical presence at Parliament House, and an increasingly extensive online presence. It is different to other public libraries in the Territory though, as it aims to collect, preserve and share with the community the documentary history of the Northern Territory in all its forms, physical and digital. This function is underpinned by the Publications (Legal Deposit) Act 2004, which requires publishers to provide the Library with a copy of any document published in the Territory. It provides access to the Northern Territory collection at its Parliament House location, through online access, and through events and exhibitions.

The Northern Territory Library supports all elements of the library sector in the Territory, including public, university, school and government libraries. It has a particularly close relationship with the Territory's 32 public and community. The Library administers operational funding grants through the Public Libraries Funding Agreement, and provides public library collections funding through the Library Resource Allocation. It facilitates support and training for public library staff and provides a Library Management System for public, school and government libraries. The Northern Territory Library also directly operates community library services at Taminmin and Nhulunbuy.

The Library also provides a Parliamentary Library Service to support members and staff of the Legislative Assembly.

The Northern Territory Library is part of the Department of Arts and Museums. It is also a member of the National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) group of libraries, which works collaboratively to strengthen library capability and information infrastructure across Australia and New Zealand.

The direction for the Library over the next three years is set out in its Strategic Plan 2015-2018.

### *Purpose of the Northern Territory Library Community Reference Group*

The Community Reference Group has been established to promote and support the work of the Northern Territory Library, and will provide advice to the Library on its development and direction.

## *Membership*

The Community Reference Group will consist of:

- three members appointed by the Northern Territory Government;
- four members from the community, appointed on the basis of an expression of interest process;
- one member to represent the Northern Territory public library sector, as nominated by the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory; • one member to represent Charles Darwin University; and
- the Director, Northern Territory Library.

Community representatives will be appointed on the basis of a demonstrated commitment to the work of the Northern Territory Library and the wider library sector, and to represent a range of demographics to ensure balanced and representative advice.

The selection of community representatives and the appointment of nominated people for specified positions will be the decision of the Chief Executive, Department of Arts and Museums.

Members of the Community Reference Group will generally be appointed for a three year term.

Members of the Community Reference Group are not remunerated.

## *Meetings*

The Community Reference Group will meet twice a year. It will be chaired by one of the government appointed members. Remote members of the group will be supported to attend by teleconference.



## INDEX

1. Selection Process
2. Selection Panel Contact Details
3. Brief History of NT Sports Awards
4. Tickets & Travel to the Awards Night
5. National Sporting Organisations recognised by the Australian Sports Commission (as at January 2018)
6. History of Winners per Category

## AWARDS

1. **Channel Nine NT Local Performance of the Year**
2. **Centralian Advocate NT Volunteer of the Year**
3. **Colemans NT Official of the Year**
4. **Carlton & United Breweries Eric Johnston Coach of the Year**
5. **Hot 100 NT Team of the Year**
6. **NT Masters Sportsperson of the Year**
7. **NT News NT Junior Sportsperson of the Year**
8. **NT Sportsperson of the Year**



## Selection Panel Meeting

8:30am – 3:00pm (or as required)

Monday 26 February 2018

# Notes for Selection Panel

1. Read this selection process document and the Awards criteria.
2. Read the nominations for each award category.
  - a. There is an assessment spreadsheet enclosed per category which you may like to fill in as you read as a personal reference for your decision-making.
  - b. You may like to note your comments and ratings for each nominee against the criteria; however they are for your reference only.
3. Select your top three nominees for each category, preferably in order (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup>). You will be asked to supply this information at the selection committee meeting.
4. You are welcome to conduct additional research on nominees if you wish.
5. When reading the nominations please keep the Awards criteria in mind.
6. The selection criteria are broad and there will be additional issues for you to consider which are not prescriptive. You may have questions or uncertainty over some aspects so we encourage you to raise and discuss inevitable ambiguities at the selection meeting.
7. The selection panel will be asked to provide a back-up name for each award in case referee checks raise concerns or where nominees do not wish to participate further.
8. **It is imperative to remember that nominations should be assessed on the merits of results and outcomes achieved in the previous calendar year – 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017.**





## **YOUR ROLE AT THE MEETING**

1. Nominate your top three nominees for each Award category.
2. Participate in discussion about the nominees and vote as the process of elimination progresses. We encourage you to join in discussion and debate to support nominees you like and not be immediately swayed by a consensus position.
3. If you know a nominee and their achievements we ask that you make this and any other potential conflicts of interest known at the selection panel meeting. If you do know a nominee we strongly encourage you to speak up and inform other panel members of additional information.
4. Each panel member will have one vote and the panel chair will have an additional casting vote should a tie in votes occur.
5. All decisions of the panel remain confidential and all papers should be left in the room at the conclusion of the meeting.
6. If for any reason a selected winner is deemed ineligible by reason of further referee check or disendorsement by their sport, the selection panel chair will be consulted prior to the back-up nominee being promoted.
7. The selection of an award recipient reflects the nominations received and information available to the panel at the time. The NT Sports Awards Selection Panel reserves the right to withdraw an award if further information or the recipients conduct draws the Award into disrepute.



## SELECTION PROCESS

1. Each category will be discussed individually. Panel members to advise 3, 2 and 1 votes which are recorded on the whiteboard by the Sports Event Coordinator.  
Discussion on votes to take place.
2. First round votes are not final and can be changed after discussion has taken place.
3. Sports Coordinator to determine the top 3 nominations in order (i.e. the one with the most votes at the top). The winner is thus selected.
4. Should no clear winner be possible, lowest vote getters will be eliminated and each panel member will be asked to provide another 3, 2, 1 vote on the revised list. This process will continue until the top three place getters are decided.
5. A panel member will be excluded from voting if they themselves or a relative is nominated for an award, or there is another agreed (by panel) form of conflict of interest. The panel member would only be excluded from voting on that category. We need to respect that they are on the panel for their expertise and assume that no bias will be shown, and no automatic exclusions will be made.
6. **Many of the nominees may have years worth of experience in their nominated categories and whilst that is appropriate to assess for the non-nominated awards, please be sure to only assess 2017 achievements for the nominated categories.**



## Selection Panel Members

### **CHAIRPERSON**

Dr. Ian Ford  
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Mr Grey Morris  
Sports Journalist  
NT News  
GPO Box 1300, Darwin NT 0801  
E: [grey.morris@news.com.au](mailto:grey.morris@news.com.au)



## Brief History

The Northern Territory Sports Awards are held every year in late March to recognise the outstanding achievements of athletes, teams, coaches, officials and volunteers during the previous year.

The NT Sports Awards were first started in 1973 by the Northern Territory Sportsman's Association before the Department of Sport and Recreation took over in the late 1980s. The Department of Sport & Recreation has again taken carriage of the Awards from 2014 onward, following on from the NT Major Events Company management of the event between 2008 & 2013.

The Non-Nominated Award Categories include:

- **NT Hall of Champions** - retired athletes who represented the Northern Territory achieving high levels of performance at national and/or international standards whilst portraying the highest standards of integrity and sportsmanship (one inductee);
- **NT Roll of Honour** - recognising service to sport in the Northern Territory by coaches, Administrators and umpires (one inductee); and
- **Steve Abala Role Model 'The Administrator's Medal'** - presented to a superb athlete in any sporting field whose sporting career has been strongly connected to the Territory and who is considered an ideal role model for our Territory youngsters to aspire to emulate (one inductee).

*NB. Initial votes for these awards have already been received. Recipients will be finalised at this meeting.*

The Nominated Awards Categories are:

1. **Channel Nine NT Local Performance of the Year**
2. **Centralian Advocate NT Volunteer of the Year**
3. **Colemans NT Official of the Year**
4. **Carlton & United Breweries Eric Johnston Coach of the Year**
5. **Hot 100 NT Team of the Year**
6. **NT Masters Sportsperson of the Year**
7. **NT News NT Junior Sportsperson of the Year**
8. **NT Sportsperson of the Year**



## Tickets & Travel to the Awards Night

Each panel member will receive two tickets to the NT Sports Awards to be held in Darwin at DoubleTree by Hilton Esplanade Darwin on Saturday 24 March 2018. If required, transport and accommodation will be provided at the Department's expense (for the panelist only).

For further information on the NT Sports Awards please contact Aleisha Sullivan, Sports Event Coordinator at the Department of Tourism and Culture - Sport and Recreation, Northern Territory Government.

**P:** 08 8982 2306

**e:** [aleisha.sullivan@nt.gov.au](mailto:aleisha.sullivan@nt.gov.au)

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Introduction**

The Northern Territory Water Safety Advisory Council (NTWSAC) will provide the Minister for Sport and Recreation with high level advice on water safety issues within the Northern Territory.

### **The Role of the NTWSAC**

1. to provide advice to the Minister for Sport and Recreation on water safety related matters;
2. to identify gaps in existing provisions of water safety initiatives in relation to the services necessary for the prevention of drowning and near drowning in the Northern Territory;
3. to proactively develop and recommend solutions to emerging and ongoing issues; and
4. to develop and implement a Northern Territory Water Safety Strategy that focuses on Water Safety Education, Research and Data Collection and Standards.

### **Advice Provided by the Council**

- The NTWSAC shall provide the best and most balanced advice possible.
- As the NTWSAC is an advisory body, the Minister retains the right to reject all or part of the advice provided.

### **General Operating Guidelines**

- Matters referred to the attention of the NTWSAC are discussed by the group which will determine action considered appropriate.
- It is hoped that most decisions will be reached by consensus. If decisions cannot be reached by consensus then an open vote, simple majority will prevail. Each appointed member to the Council will have one voting right.
- Ensure that reports to the Minister are treated as confidential.
- Ensure that public statements on recommendations or advice from the NTWSAC are not made until approved by the Minister and are made by the Chairperson.
- The full Council will meet quarterly and or at the discretion of the Chair.
- The Council will form subgroups to address key priority areas as appropriate and will report to the full Council on a regular basis.

### **Membership Guidelines**

- Members will be appointed to serve in a voluntary capacity.
- Membership is sought from organisations, government departments and individuals with an interest or expertise to contribute to Council.
- Members will be appointed to formally represent the community or their associated organisation or department.

### **Membership Structure**

- The NTWSAC will comprise of up to 16 members and will be appointed by the Minister for Sport and Recreation for a term not exceeding three years.



- As vacancies occur, organisations and individuals with a vested interest in water safety will be encouraged to submit expressions of interest to join the Council.
- An independent Chairperson will be appointed by the Minister.
- The structure and membership of the Council will be reviewed as required by the Minister.
- A quorum must be achieved before a meeting can proceed (half + 1 OR 51% present).
- Membership may be drawn from the following government and non-government groups:

Terms of Reference 2013

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- Kidsafe NT;
- Surf Life Saving NT;
- Royal Life Saving Society Australia NT Branch;
- Department of Education and Children's Services;
- Department of Health;
- Department of Sport and Recreation;
- Department of Transport;
- Local Government Association of the NT;
- Tourism Top End;
- Amateur Fisherman's Association of the Northern Territory;
- Parks and Wildlife Commission;
- Northern Territory Police;
- Community Representatives; and
- Shire Council or Territory Growth Town.

### **Terms of Office**

Members are to be appointed for a three year period, with reappointment at the discretion of the Minister.

A member's position on the Council becomes vacant if the member:

- Completes the term of their appointment and is not reappointed;
- Resigns by way of letter of resignation addressed to the Minister; or
- Has not attended for three consecutive meetings except if granted leave by the Council.
- The Minister may remove a member and/or chairperson from their position(s) at any time and for any reason.

### **The Chairperson**

An independent Chairperson will be appointed by the Minister or Chief Minister. In the event of a NTWSAC meeting having been called and the Chair is unable to attend, the Executive Officer will conduct the meeting.

### **Code of Conduct and Council Member**

#### **Responsibilities** *Responsibilities of the Chair:*

- To act as spokesperson for the NTWSAC.
- To be aware of the different skill levels of committee members and endeavour to give equitable time and space to all members.

- To work with committee members towards achieving the responsibilities of the NTWSAC.
- To facilitate the participation of members.
- To act as a guide through the agenda.
- To ensure discussion on a given topic is relevant and in order.
- To request substantiation of contributions from members when appropriate.
- To ensure that advice to the Minister is clear and achievable.
- To maintain order and direction.
- To adhere to Operating Guidelines.
- To liaise with the Executive Officer, Executive Director and the Minister when necessary.

*Responsibilities of each member:*

- To attend NTWSAC meetings regularly and advise of non-attendance.
- To report to their organisation and disseminate relevant water safety information.
- To gain cooperation from their organisation to support water safety actions within the Water Safety Strategy.
- To contribute expertise in improving water safety.
- To substantiate contributions.
- To work co-operatively with other members.
- To work co-operatively as part to the committee toward achieving the responsibilities.

Terms of Reference 2013

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- It is each member's responsibility to keep abreast of ideas developments, policy direction and matters generally which impact on water safety within the Northern Territory.
- To adhere to the guidelines of the NTWSAC.

**Personal and Professional Behaviour**

- NTWSAC members will undertake their role using due care, honesty and integrity.
- Members will always perform the functions associated with membership diligently, impartially and conscientiously to the best of their ability. Communication will be open and constructive.
- Members will behave in a way that does not directly or indirectly lead to dishonest or improper use of their Ministerial Advisory Council position.
- Members will not use any information to which they have access to gain an improper advantage, or in a way which may be disadvantageous to the NT Government, NTWSAC or its interests.

**Public Comment**

- Members will not make public comment on behalf of the Minister or the Council without the specific agreement of the Minister's Office. It is understood that as a citizen and in performing other professional roles members have the right to make comments and enter into public debate, providing it is not perceived to be an official comment on behalf of the Council or the NT Government

### **Conflict of Interest**

- Members will consciously avoid any conflict of interest and will not allow personal interest to conflict with their role as a Council member.
- Where a conflict of interest arises at a meeting, a member shall declare such conflict. The Chair will decide whether the member should withdraw from the meeting while the matter is discussed. This declaration can occur before the meeting for a determination by the Chair

### **Confidentiality**

- Members of the Council will, from time to time, have access to confidential information. Material which is confidential and must not be disclosed will be marked “Confidential”
- Members agree to be bound by this protocol both during the term of their membership and following the completion of their term of office.
- Should a member or group of members breach confidentiality the NT Government reserves the right to take legal action to restrain the member or group of members from compromising the integrity of the Council.

### **Evaluation and Review**

The Terms of Reference for and role of the NTWSAC will be reviewed every three years aligned to the National and Northern Territory Water Safety Strategy.

Your ref NTA2012/0009-0056

## **Northern Territory Archives Service**

### **Terms of Reference – Oral History Advisory Committee**

#### **Overall objective**

The Oral History Advisory Committee provides advice and recommendations regarding the acquisition of oral histories for the Northern Territory Archives Service oral history collection. The Committee assists the NTAS by promoting use of the collection.

#### **Background**

In 1979, the Northern Territory Government established an oral history program within the Chief Minister's Department. In 1985 this work became the responsibility of the Northern Territory Archives Service. In 2016, over 2400 sound recordings of interviews have been deposited with the NTAS.

#### **Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of the Committee are

- a. Provide strategic advice on the Collection Policy and Guidelines, to ensure the collection builds on and links to other resources, collecting the memory of the Territory.
- b. Build and define co-operative relationships to encourage others to undertake oral history projects.
- c. Promote the oral history collections as widely as possible with the public, special interest groups, societies and organisations and education and tertiary institutions.

#### **Scope**

The Committee's focus will include:

- a. Commenting on selection criterion and guidelines to ensure oral history interviews collected:
  - have lasting national or Territory-wide significance; and/or,
  - address a unique subject with probable implications for future research, and/or,
  - link to existing content already available.
- b. Providing recommendations on the promotion and discoverability of the collection to both professional historians and people with a non-professional, potentially family interest in exploring the historical records.

### **Scope restrictions**

While the Committee will provide advice and recommendations, the decisions regarding the day to day management of the Oral History Unit will remain the responsibility of the Northern Territory Archives Service.

### **Membership**

The Committee's membership will consist of:

- The Director, NTASThe Manager, Oral History Unit, NTAS
- Department of Arts and Museums representative (with a history background)
- External representatives with sound historical research background and/or knowledge of Territory history
- A National Archives of Australia Darwin representative, with sound understanding of Indigenous issues and Northern Territory social history.

### **Meetings**

The Committee will meet bi-annually, at the request of the Manager, Oral History Unit.

### **Reporting**

The Committee will report to the Chief Executive the Department of Arts and Museums, bi-annually through the Director, NTAS.



# Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve

Joint Management Plan June 2008





## **Acknowledgements**

This plan is the result of many hours of consultation and planning between the Traditional Owners of Rainbow Valley and Parks and Wildlife rangers, planning and joint management staff. Staff of the Central Land Council, especially the joint management officers have had a vital role, assisting the joint management partners throughout and providing much valued input into the Plan's preparation.

Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve  
Joint Management Plan June 2008

Parks and Wildlife Service of the Northern Territory,  
Department of Natural Resources, Environment and The Arts,  
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## Message from the Minister

The Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve is a place of remarkable natural beauty and conservation value. Many are familiar with its image - strikingly coloured sandstone cliffs against a deep blue sky, sometimes perfectly mirrored in a shallow, water-bearing claypan. The reserve attracts about 10,000 visitors each year. Short walks, photography and opportunities to learn about the area's nature and culture typify visitors' experience of this wonderful place. The reserve also conserves some 400 species of plants – remarkable biodiversity for a relatively small reserve. Primary among the values of the reserve however, are its cultural associations. It is a place of enduring cultural significance, a living cultural landscape.



Rainbow Valley is the traditional country of the Upper Southern Arrernte Aboriginal people. Known to the Southern Arrernte as *Wurre*, Rainbow Valley is part of *Imarnte*, the country to which the *Twertentyeye* group of the Southern Arrernte belong. For thousands of years the ancestors of the traditional owners have lived on, cared for, and been provided for, by this land, under their law.

Recent changes to the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* bring exciting new opportunities for joint management partnerships with the Aboriginal traditional owners of Northern Territory parks and reserves. Significantly, the Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve is the first to have a Joint Management Plan prepared under these changes.

This plan gives authority to Traditional Owners' connection to their country under Territory law as well as their law. It makes clear their aspirations for social development, and their desire to be successful joint managers. The cooperative preparation of this Joint Management Plan by the Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service and Traditional Owners is evidence of a good start to joint management of this popular reserve.

This plan spells out a bright future for the reserve and everyone who has an interest in it. Visitors will be able to enjoy cultural aspects they have not seen before. Wildlife and habitat conservation will continue with the invaluable addition of an Aboriginal perspective. The reserve will also provide work for Traditional Owners, their families and their communities through cooperative projects. I am confident the public will welcome the reserve's future as outlined by this plan.

The reserve's Traditional Owners were actively involved in preparing the joint management plan and have been eagerly awaiting its coming into operation. I thank and congratulate them for their part in making this plan. I also thank and congratulate the officers of the Central Land Council who worked hard and effectively with the joint management partners to facilitate this plan's development.

Mr Len Kiely MLA  
Minister for Parks and Wildlife

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Message from from the Minister







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**Joint  
Management Plan**

**Vision  
and  
Summary**





***“ Keeping our country alive  
for the next generation ”***

The Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Service will work strongly together, managing Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve so that:

- The past is acknowledged and respected as we plan for the future.
- Traditional Owners' interests and aspirations are respected.
- The joint management partnership itself benefits and grows.
- The knowledge and expertise of the joint management partners is combined to look after culture, country, flora and fauna.
- Visitors will enjoy the reserve and be able to learn about culture, country, wildlife and joint management.
- The joint management partners can be proud of their achievements.

Joint management will provide opportunities for Traditional Owners, their families and communities to participate in the reserve's management, preserve aspects of culture that are important to them and derive social and economic benefit.

Joint management will continue to protect the reserve's values. The natural state of the reserve will be preserved as before. As far as resources permit, the impact of threats including fire, feral animals and weeds will be minimised. Plants of special conservation value will still be protected.

Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve will continue to be an important place for low-key, nature-based tourism with new opportunities for visitors to enjoy and be informed about Aboriginal culture.





***“ This place identifies where we come from and who we are ”***

**The Reserve and its values** (pages 2-4)

Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve lies about 100 kilometres south of Alice Springs at the eastern end of the James Range. It has been recognised at a national level for its cultural, landscape, flora conservation and aesthetic values.

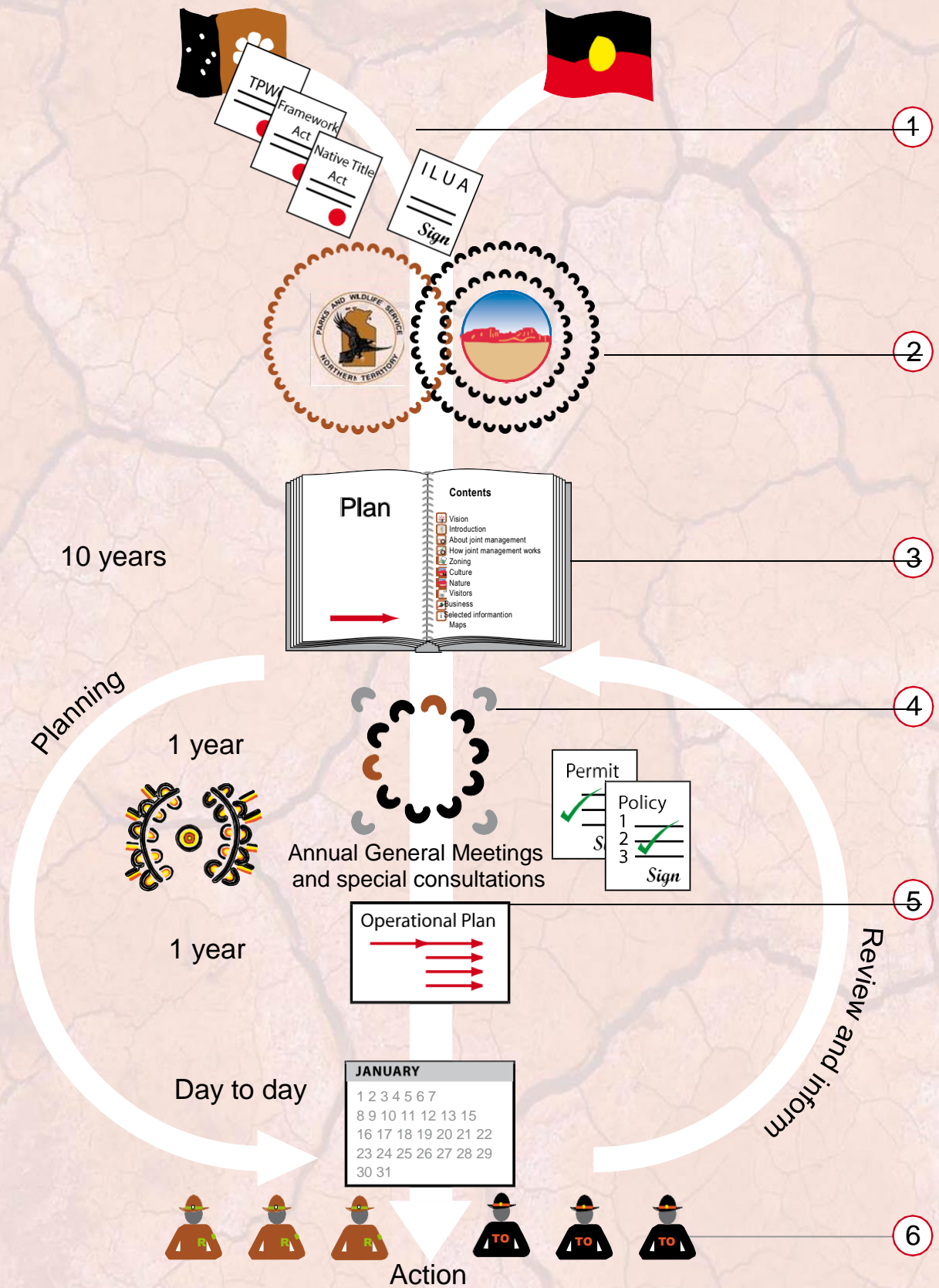
This place is well-known for the brilliantly coloured sandstone cliffs that give the reserve its European name. It is also a living cultural landscape, the traditional country of the Upper Southern Arrernte Aboriginal people. The Traditional Owners call themselves *Twertentyeye*. Rainbow Valley, known by them as *Wurre*, is part of *Imarnte*, the country to which they belong. The reserve also has very important archaeological sites and artefacts that are evidence of ancient Aboriginal connections to the area.

More than 10,000 people visit the reserve each year to take photographs, enjoy short walks and to learn about the area's natural and cultural values.

The reserve has a rich diversity of native plants and is mostly free of weeds. Several types of plants have special conservation value.



# Summary





# Summary

## **Joint management, decision making and planning**

- 1 Legislation**

Joint management is set up under Northern Territory Law. Under the *Commonwealth Native Title Act* the Indigenous Land Use Agreement provides for joint management of the reserve.
- Joint management partners**
- 2** The Northern Territory Government's Parks and Wildlife Service and the Traditional Owners of Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve.
- Joint management plan**
- 3** An agreement between the joint management partners about managing the reserve together.
- Shared decision making**
- 4** The joint management partners will have annual general meetings to prepare and review annual operational plans. There will also be special consultations with Traditional Owners – all Traditional Owners or a committee - for urgent decisions. The partners also approve policy and permits. Central Land Council help at meetings and consultations.
- Operational plans**
- 5** Operational Plans: Annual plans that set out agreed activities, reviewed each year.
- Day to day work**
- 6** Traditional Owners and rangers carry out agreed management under the joint management plan and operational plan.



# Summary



***“ If we don’t get it right  
then we’ll all miss out  
on the benefits  
waiting for us ”***

## **How joint management will work** (pages 14-20)

The joint management partners agree to:

- Share information, learn together and keep the partnership growing and strong.
- See that work, training and business opportunities are there for Traditional Owners.
- Share decision-making through annual general meetings and special consultations, when needed.
- Work together on management programs, on the ground.
- Keep track of our performance by checking:
  - Progress against the aims stated in this Plan.
  - Our satisfaction.
  - Benefits to Traditional Owners.

Annual operational plans will be set out each year at annual general meetings. These plans will make sure the interests of Traditional Owners are taken into account in the day to day management of the reserve.

The Central Land Council will represent the interests of Traditional Owners and help make joint management strong.

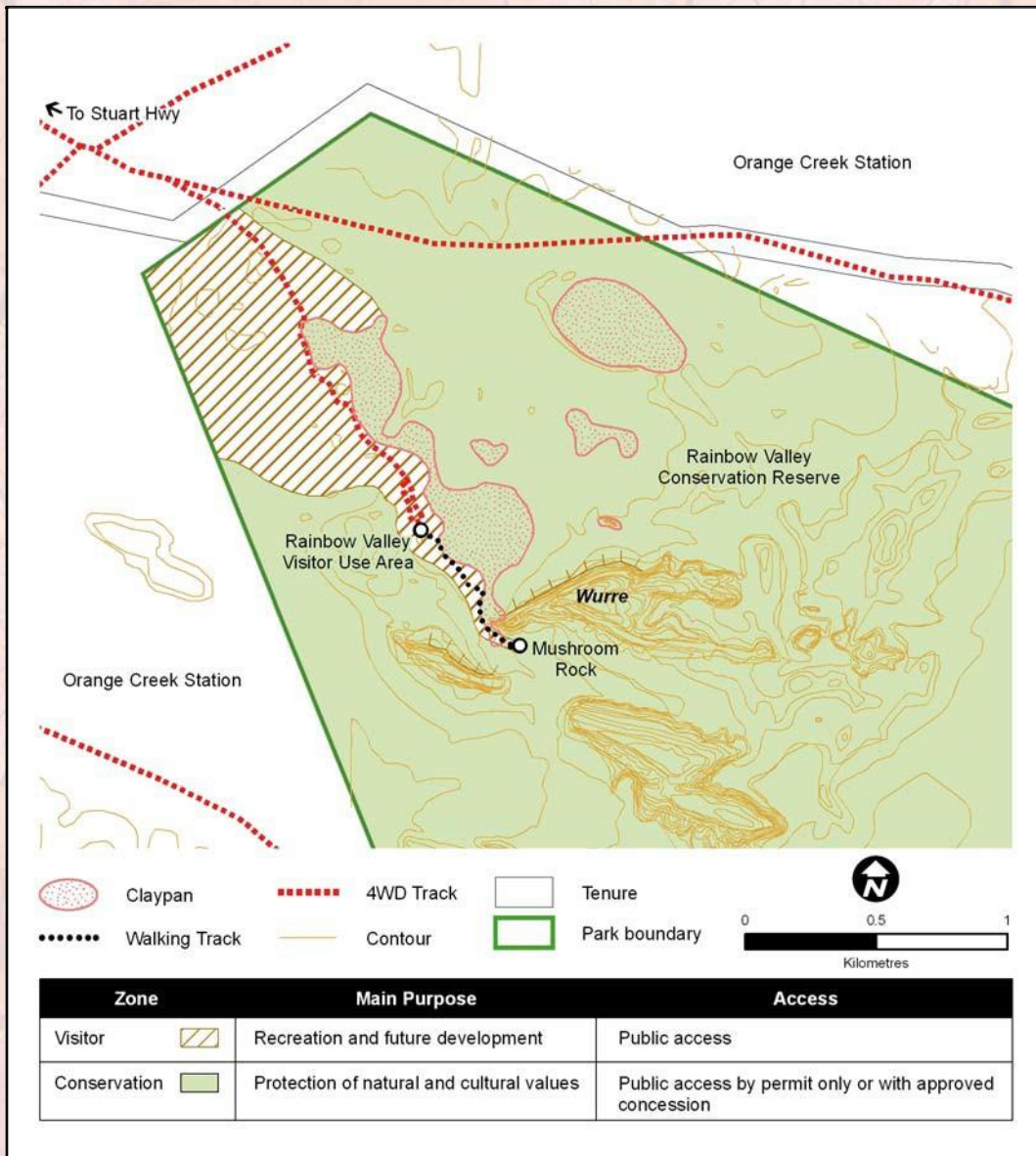


# Summary



**“Stepping on the right path.  
Don’t walk blindly,  
we need to know  
where we are walking”**

**Zoning** (pages 21-22)





# Summary



***“ It’s important to keep culture alive for the next generation”***

## **Managing cultural heritage**

**– looking after people and country** (pages 23-27)

The joint management partners agree to:

- See that Traditional Owners control management of Aboriginal cultural heritage on the reserve.
- Develop a cultural heritage management program.
- Traditional Owners having access to the reserve for cultural reasons such as looking after sites, gathering bush tucker and ceremony.
- Protect areas of special cultural value.



***“ We need to have a final say on how our product is marketed, including images”***

## **Managing business** (pages 49-56)

The joint management partners agree to:

- Work together on operational plans and programs.
- Work with the community, neighbours and other stakeholders.
- Identify and support economic benefits to Traditional Owners available through flexible employment and training, direct employment, enterprise on the reserve and contracts.
- Promote the reserve with accurate and appropriate information, images and language.
- Jointly approve permits for public gatherings, activities in the conservation zone, tourism concessions, commercial filming and external research, survey and monitoring.
- See that research reports help inform Traditional Owners and protect their intellectual property rights.



# Summary



***“It’s okay for people to go there, as long as they look after that place and themselves”***

## **Managing visitors – sharing the reserve** (pages 45-48)

The joint management partners agree to:

- Provide better information to visitors and tour operators.
- Develop a new walking track and viewing facility, subject to funding and expand the campground, if required.
- Require people to have special permits for access into the Conservation Zone.
- Support commercial tourism opportunities for Traditional Owners.



***“ When we look at the land, it’s a part of us, not just a pretty sight ”***

## **Managing natural heritage – looking after land and wildlife** (pages 28-44)

The joint management partners agree to:

- Keep the area natural and make sure any development is carefully planned.
- Not consider living areas on reserve during the next ten years.
- Open a new public access track and repair the old track alongside the claypan.
- Keep people off the claypan unless it is dry and they have a permit.
- Record cultural information about plants and animals and share with visitors and others when Traditional Owners want to.
- Continue research, survey and monitoring plants and animals to help good decision-making.
- Continue protecting native plants and animals by managing weeds, fire, and feral animals.
- Not allow any hunting on the reserve.





**Part 1**

**Introduction**



# 1. Introducing the Reserve and this Plan

## 1.1 The Reserve and its values

*It's an important place for family to visit and camp and to teach kids about that place and looking after country.*

Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve lies about 100 kilometres south of Alice Springs at the eastern end of the James Range (See Map 1). For its relatively small area (2483 Ha) the reserve has surprising diversity of significant cultural, natural and recreational values. Its cultural, aesthetic, landform, and flora conservation values are significant at the national level.

The reserve was declared under Section 12 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (TPWCA)* in 1990. It comprises NT Portion 1993 and is held under Perpetual Crown Lease No. 307 by the Conservation Land Corporation, granted on 18 June 1984.

This is the second management plan for this reserve. It has been written by the Parks and Wildlife Service in partnership with the reserve's Aboriginal Traditional Owners who know the Rainbow Valley cliffs by its Southern Arrernte name *Wurre*. Management of the reserve began in the early 1980s. This plan builds on the first plan of management, which came into effect in 1997, with the new dimension of joint management. Key management programs of recent years include:

- Intensive weed control focussing on the highly invasive Buffel Grass.
- Special monitoring and protection of plants of high conservation significance.
- Maintaining boundary fences to keep cattle out of the reserve.
- Controlled habitat burning to reduce the chance of wildfires.
- Maintaining visitor services including seasonal ranger talks.
- Recording and researching archaeological sites.

The reserve's values summarised below, together with the joint management partners' vision, establish the purpose and management directions of Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve for the term of this Joint Management Plan.

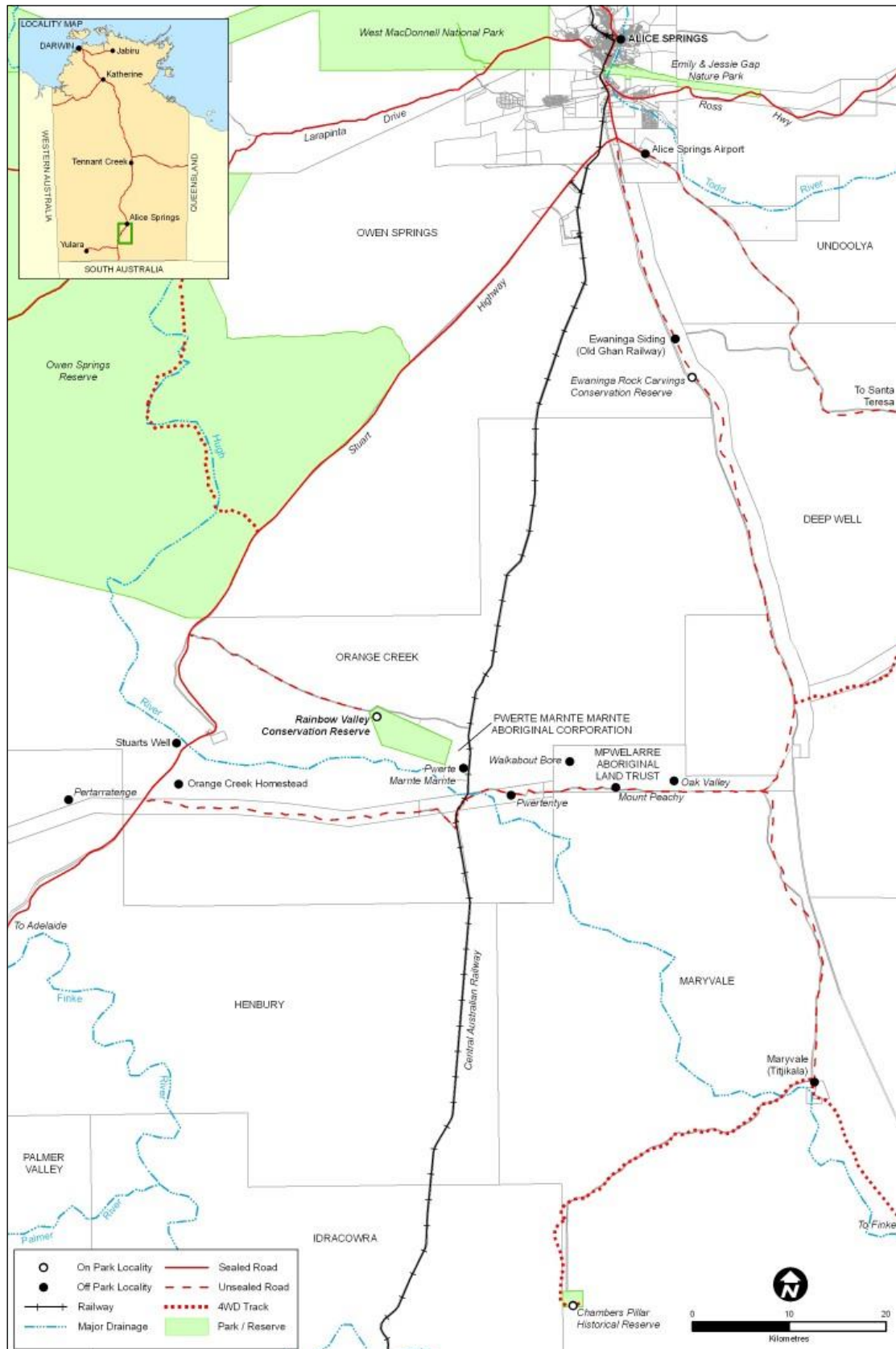
### Aboriginal Cultural Values

This plan recognises and reflects the strong Aboriginal connections to the area. These are visible and tangible with respect to artefacts and archaeological sites, in which the reserve is rich. Less tangible but every bit as important are the cultural links the Traditional Owners keep with this land. For Traditional Owners, culture is a layer that touches every decision and action. They say: "The landscape identifies us and connects us with our past, present and future."

*Grindstones are evidence of a long history of Aboriginal use and occupation of the area*



Map 1. Location of Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve



Culture adds value to the reserve in other ways. Information and interaction with cultural values can enrich the experience of visitors. Cultural aspects attract students and researchers of culture. Aboriginal knowledge adds an extra dimension to land and wildlife management; in the conservation context, species have cultural meaning and value as well as ecological value.

Cultural values also underpin joint management. There is growing interest worldwide in cooperative management of protected land involving indigenous people and governments. As one of the first Northern Territory reserves to have a joint management plan under the comprehensive new framework established in 2005, the process of jointly managing this reserve will be watched with interest by many in Australia and internationally.

### Natural Values

The reserve is located in the interzone of the Finke and MacDonnell Bioregions and has a surprising variety of landscape and appealing natural features. The focus of the reserve has always been the brilliantly coloured sandstone cliffs that give the reserve its name. These examples of geomorphic processes are one reason for nominating the reserve for National Estate listing. The cliffs and other striking sandstone outcrops lie in a sandplain area with occasional low dunes and low rugged ranges in the south. In the reserve's west, a chain of interconnected claypans is a major feature.

The reserve's flora is remarkably diverse. Over 400 plant species occur within spinifex grasslands, open shrublands and woodlands of mulga and desert oak. Several species are of bioregional or Territory significance. One species, the Rainbow Valley Eromophila, is listed as vulnerable under both national and Territory legislation. The values relating to habitat and flora are all the more important because the reserve is relatively weed-free. These values lend themselves to ecological study. The reserve protects fauna typical of its desert habitats but there are no fauna species with special conservation status.

### Recreation / Tourism Values

The striking white, yellow and orange sandstone cliffs of *Wurre* have been featured many times in the popular media to represent the beauty of desert Australia. When water fills the claypan at the bottom of the cliff, reflecting its image at sunset, the result is a stunningly beautiful scene that helps to attract more than 10 000 visitors each year. This makes the reserve a significant tourist destination and a significant contributor to the regional economy. Short walks, photography and opportunities to learn about the area's nature and culture typifies visitors' experience.

More than 10,000  
people visit the  
Reserve each year.





## 1.2 Background to joint management

Joint management is about partners working together in ways that respect Aboriginal culture, knowledge and interests. This respect is reflected in shared decision-making.

In 2005 the *TPWCA* was amended to provide for joint management of twenty seven parks and reserves that were subject to the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act of 2003*, often called the 'Framework Act'. The Framework Act provided for the settlement of land and/or native title claims over these areas and created the framework for their joint management. Rainbow Valley is one of the reserves subject to the new joint management arrangements.

In the case of Rainbow Valley, Aboriginal Traditional Owners do not hold title to the land. The terms of joint management for the reserve have authority in law under the *TPWCA*, an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) registered under the *Native Title Act* and a Joint Management Agreement between the Northern Territory Government and the Northern and Central Land Councils. Among other conditions, the ILUA establishes the joint management of the reserve for ninety-nine years. A copy of the ILUA is given in Appendix 4. Selected parts of the Act are given in Appendix 5. This plan complies with all of these legal instruments.

Selected parts of the *TPWCA* are also given in Appendix 6. Briefly, the Act defines the joint management partners as the Northern Territory Government and the Aboriginal Traditional Owners. Section 25AB of the Act states:

*The objective of joint management of a park or reserve is to jointly establish an equitable partnership to manage and maintain the park or reserve as part of a comprehensive and representative system of parks and reserves in the Territory and for the following purposes:*

- (a) Benefiting both the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve and the wider community;*
- (b) Protecting biological diversity;*
- (c) Serving visitor and community needs for education and enjoyment.*

The Act also establishes the requirements of joint management plans. The Central Land Council (CLC) has an important role in assisting joint management. The Act defines this role, which is to represent and protect the interests of the Traditional Owners in relation to the reserve's management.

Please refer to the graphic representations in the Vision-Summary.



*Joint management planning camp at the Reserve in September 2005.*

### 1.3 About this Plan

This Joint Management Plan gives direction to the joint management partners for day-to-day management of the reserve. It describes how the objectives of joint management will be met, presenting both general and specific management actions against which progress can be measured. The plan complies with Section 25AE of the *TPWCA*. It replaces the reserve's first plan of management. This plan will have authority for at least five years unless amended. It is intended to replace this plan with a new plan not later than 2017. This plan is effective from 13 June 2008.

The plan was prepared by the joint management partners in consultation with other interested parties. Planning began with a meeting of Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Service staff in September 2005. At that meeting, Traditional Owners formed a smaller group to work with Parks and Wildlife. The plan was completed through a number of meetings using participatory planning methods, assisted by the Central Land Council. The bold, italicised statements scattered throughout this plan are quotes of the Traditional Owners made during the preparation of this plan.

In joint planning discussions, the Traditional Owners identified the following as their main interests as joint managers of the reserve. These interests align with the intentions of the Parks and Wildlife Service and the objectives of joint management as they are reflected throughout this plan:

- Keeping culture strong.
- Protecting the values of the reserve.
- Getting joint management right.
- Making sure visitors show respect and behave in the proper way.
- Providing safe and culturally appropriate opportunities for visitors.
- Providing appropriate information for visitors.
- Having good working relations with neighbours and others.

This plan is effective from 13 June 2008.



## 2. About the joint management partners



### 2.1 The Aboriginal Traditional Owners

*This place is important as it identifies where we come from and who we are. It gives us connection with the past, present and future.*

For the purposes of joint management, Traditional Owners are defined as the local descent group of Aboriginal people who have common spiritual affiliations and spiritual responsibility for the land, and are entitled by tradition to forage over that land.

Across Australia, principles of land ownership bind Aboriginal people to specific areas of country. This is true of the *Arrernte* people of central Australia, including the families of Rainbow Valley.

Many aspects of Arrernte culture can be explained with reference to land and the travels, activities and interactions of ancestral beings during the creation times or *Altyerre* when the land and all its features came to be. Arrernte families believe they are the direct descendants of these ancestral beings and are responsible for groups of sacred sites, which define their *apmere* 'country' or 'estate', most often named after a prominent sacred site within it. Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve is part of traditional country associated with the *Imarnte* estate, centred on the Hugh River drainage basin.

*Imarnte is the main place where our ancestors lived. That is why we belong to Wurre, Mpwelarre, Mt Burrell, Titjikala and Chambers Pillar. It's always been there.*

The Imarnte estate includes *Wurre* (Rainbow Valley), *Mpwelarre* (Walkabout Bore), *Manpwele* (Mt Burrell), *Titjikala* (Maryvale), *Iterrkawerre* (Chambers Pillar) and extends across the Orange Creek, Deep Well, and Maryvale pastoral leases.



*Traditional Owners today continue to express their connection to country*

*Our dreaming goes a long way.*

Aboriginal people from the surrounding country — *Iterrkewarre* (Idracowra), *Ilperle* (Henbury) and *Urenhe* (Owen Springs) — also have important cultural connections to *Imarnte* that remain strong today.

*We call ourselves Twertentye ... we are all cousins.*

Now, as in the past, skin names and totems partly determine rights to land as well as marriage, and rights to food and water. Aboriginal people today continue to express their connection to country and culture through language, storytelling, song, ceremony and using the resources of the land.

Traditional Owners of Rainbow Valley are associated with an Arrernte-speaking dialect group known as Upper Southern Arrernte or *Pertame*. The language is also known as *Twertentye*, the name for the Hugh River (central to the Imarnte estate) and the name used often by Traditional Owners to describe themselves.

For Arrernte people, kin relationships explain much more than who is family and who is not. They also connect people directly to land. The use of skin names places everyone in the traditional social framework (or kin system) which guides every person's behaviour towards other kin. Skin names are inherited from both the land (estate) where a person is born and from a person's father. Every estate has its own pair of father/child skin names, passed on to each child born into the estate-owning group.

*Imarnte. This is where we all belong.  
This is where we all come from and from there we spread  
out. Everybody met and lived here.*

The Rainbow Valley families also describe themselves in relation to their country as *Imarnte-arenye*, which means 'people belonging to Imarnte'. There are a number of ways in which a person may belong to an estate or 'country.' The most common way people belong to country is through their father and paternal grandfather. Arrernte people call a person related to country in this way *apmereke-artweye*, literally 'person belonging to country'. Such people are responsible for looking after sacred sites and objects, performing ceremonies and controlling access by others.

People may also belong to country through their mother's father. These people are known as *kwertengwerle* — 'caretakers' or 'managers'. They make sure details of the ancestral beings' travels and deeds are properly passed on and that their sacred sites are cared for, and they assist *apmereke-artweye* on issues affecting country. A person might also be *kwertengwerle* through connection to a dreaming story within that country and having been conceived or born within that country. Neither the *apmereke-artweye* or *kwertengwerle* group can act independently of each other. Both have connection to and responsibility for country and sites on it.



*We don't just look at the rock as a rock.  
It has a story and it is a living thing.  
We know the stories and it's a part of us.*

To Traditional Owners, Rainbow Valley is a place that is alive with sacred, cultural and historical significance. A painting (below) by a senior Traditional Owner shows the Rainbow Valley rock feature, claypan and surrounding landscape as a base. Aspects of country and culture that are important to families are shown in additional layers.

Imarnte is shown as a central group of concentric circles with Rainbow Valley to the south-west and Titjikala to the east. Footprints pass across the landscape, representing the travels of ancestors and the present-day people of Imarnte — the *apmereke-artweye* (people of our country) and *kwertengwerle* (managers of our country).

Stencils of the artist's hands and symbols depicting small groups of men, women and children represent ownership, belonging and the continued presence of people in the landscape. This presence is connected with important practices such as:

- *anpernirrentye* (looking after our family).
- *altyerre anwernekenhe antanterretyeke* (looking after our culture).
- *kere merne anwerneke* (looking after [edible] animals and food).
- *apmere amwerneke antatarretyeke* (looking after our country).
- *kitye anwerneke akaltye-antetyeke* (teaching our kids).
- *apmere anwerne-kenheke ayeye* (stories for our land).
- *arntarente-areme anwernekenhe altyerre atywerrenge* (looking after our dreaming law).



Painting by Eric  
Peter Mbitjana  
Braedon© 2006

*It is important for people to know how and why  
we are on country.*

Traditional Owners of Rainbow Valley today reflect the diversity and tenacity of Aboriginal law, providing a strong link to the country through descent and close family ties, ancestral narratives, and continued presence and activities such as hunting, gathering and use of traditional land management practices.

Archaeological evidence at Rainbow Valley links people to the site and *Imarnte* over a period of 30 000 years. Most local material relates to activity of the last 1300 years.

All of the *Imarnte* country is within the Hugh River drainage basin, which was the resource base for an Indigenous economy with 'many large and permanent waterholes' (Wood 1986:4, citing Strehlow 1947:71) providing fresh water, fish, waterfowl and game.

In 1859, John McDouall Stuart found large camps based on these waterholes. The people trapped fish using strongly constructed brush fences and other methods. Additional important natural and permanent resources for both water and food came from rock holes, soakages and gorges in the James Ranges running east and west around the present day Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve.

Early European explorers such as Stuart thought that the Hugh and Finke river system could support European settlement. In 1863, the Northern Territory was annexed by the South Australian Government which then quickly leased southern Arrernte lands to pastoralists, who came from further south hoping to create a large-scale cattle industry. Early pastoral leases established in the late 1860s — including Henbury, Idracowra, Deep Well and Mt. Burrell (now Maryvale) — were sold to former managers and stock workers after the severe drought of 1889-94 reduced the value of the leases. These new cattlemen were only able to withstand the drought due to 'their acquisition of low cost Aboriginal labour' (Wood 1986:5).

The Spanish influenza epidemic of 1919-20 (Strehlow 1969) decimated Arrernte people with heavy losses amongst the *Pertame*. By this time, Indigenous populations previously living in an environment with a vast and diversified resource base had come to depend on a ration-based economy based on outstations and homesteads such as Henbury, Mt Burrell, Old Crown Point, Horseshoe Bend and Idracowra. These stations fenced off the country and to some extent blocked access to vital food resources such as water and game.

In order to survive, Aboriginal men and women took up ration-paying jobs, providing inexpensive labour for cattle stations. Today, many Traditional Owners remember their parents and grandparents being trained and completely engaged in station life (Wood 1986:6). It is also suggested (Paterson 2005:284-285) that there were 'mixed descent men, who ran cattle and were granted grazing licenses, albeit rarely. This indicates that some Aboriginal people were running their own cattle ventures within one or two generations of the arrival of white pastoralists.'

The James Ranges were one of the last areas in this region where Aboriginal people could hunt and gather. From as late as 1930, the Ranges' natural resources were contested by pastoral interests. When the railway was constructed to Apatula (Finke) in the late 1930s, stock could be transported more quickly, but pastoralism made the ranges inaccessible to Aboriginal people.

Severe droughts forced Aboriginal stock workers and their families to move from station to station, sometimes camping at rail sidings, depending upon work availability and weather conditions.

By the 1950s in the South-Central region, Aboriginal people were encouraged to leave the pastoral stations of Maryvale, Horseshoe Bend, Idracowra and Andado, and move to new welfare settlements, reducing the stations' dependency on cheap labour. Families were moved to settlements such as Santa Teresa, Titjikala, Apatula, Ernabella, Mutitjulu, and Imanpa.

Near the Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve, 'Mt Burrell and later Maryvale homesteads have historically been the most important foci for the Imarnte-affiliated families' (Wood 1986:6). Many descendants were 'born at one of these homesteads and have spent significant portions of their working lives on the Mt Burrell/Maryvale pastoral leases.'

Despite these great difficulties in the recent past, Imarnte families have persevered. They have established working outstations and homes at Oak Valley, John Holland Bore and Walkabout Outstation. Families also live and work in Alice Springs, with some members travelling further afield within the Territory or interstate to pursue careers and lifestyle. Although people may be away from traditional country for long periods, their strong attachment to country is unbroken.

*We grew up knowing all this place. We miss it when we go away.  
Imarnte always calls us back.*

Traditional Owners of Rainbow Valley are actively involved in the tourism, arts and pastoral industries. On nearby Oak Valley Outstation, Oak Valley Tours is owned and operated by Traditional Owners and caters to both domestic and international tourists, offering cultural tours and a well-established camping ground. Traditional Owners have also been involved in the establishment of *Gunya Titjikala* at Titjikala community, a cultural tourism venture aimed at the luxury market. Traditional Owners run cattle and horses for commercial purposes on their land, and are long-term employees on several pastoral properties in the area. Traditional Owners also run a small market garden located next to the reserve that supplies Titjikala community with fresh produce.

*We are proud of who we are.*

Rainbow Valley Traditional Owners continue working towards formal recognition of their strong ties to country through a Native Title Consent Determination commenced in 2003. They have welcomed joint management and are determined to make it work well. They see it as another opportunity for their families to take part in work and cultural activity. Families of Rainbow Valley are already enjoying working with the Parks and Wildlife Service and look forward to working with others who have an interest in the reserve.

*We have to be committed. We want to work together  
for the future of our families.*



## 2.2 The Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service

The Parks and Wildlife Service is a division of the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts. It is a field-based organisation with approximately 120 rangers supported by scientific, planning, management and administration staff. The Service is dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural values of parks, while providing high-quality nature-based tourism and recreation opportunities for visitors. The service is committed to engaging the public and working with the interests of the community.

The Territory's park system includes some ninety-three parks and reserves with a total area of nearly 47 000 square kilometres. Parks are a vital investment in our future. They underpin the conservation of our environment and biodiversity. Well-managed they will provide sustainable social and economic benefits. The Service recognises that parks are at the heart of the Territory's tourism industry, our largest employer and second-largest income earner.

The Service is entering an exciting new era. Where previously joint management principles have applied to just a few parks, they now apply in Territory law to a third of the parks estate and are integral to the Service's business. The Service is responding with new ways of thinking, introducing new training and other programs to develop our capacity as effective joint managers.

The Parks and Wildlife Service is not new to joint management. Garig Gunuk Barlu National Park in the Top End has been jointly managed since 1981. Other examples include the high profile Nitmiluk National Park and Tnorala (Gosse Bluff) Conservation Reserve. While each park and Traditional Owner group is unique, the service has learned much from its shared management of these parks.

The Parks and Wildlife Service is committed to seeing that joint management partnerships grow and become truly equitable and that Traditional Owners benefit culturally, socially and economically from joint management.

This Joint Management Plan has been developed by the joint management partners in a very positive spirit. Like the Traditional Owners of the reserve, the Parks and Wildlife Service is optimistic about the shared future.





**Part 2**

**How the  
Reserve  
will be  
managed**

## 3. How joint management will work



*We can achieve a lot together by building up trust and working together on common goals.*

*If we don't get it right then we all miss out on all the benefits waiting for us.*

### Introduction

This section of the Plan talks about making joint management strong and successful. This joint management partnership is a new one. The partners recognise that successful partnerships are built over time.

Joint management is about working and making decisions about the reserve together, in an equitable partnership. This section of the Plan outlines how decision making will happen in general and refers to specific decisions that will need to be made. It defines successful joint management and describes the steps that will be taken to make sure the partners keep track of progress. It also looks at ways in which social and economic outcomes for Traditional Owners will be pursued.

### Principles for getting joint management right

- Trust and respect; sharing information, understanding and points of view.
- Sharing decision-making and responsibility for management.
- Working together on management programs.
- Monitoring how joint management is working.
- Traditional Owners teaching rangers about country and culture.
- Rangers teaching Traditional Owners about managing parks.
- Managing cultural knowledge so that culture and people are protected.
- Training, jobs and business opportunities for Traditional Owners.
- Providing opportunities for all Traditional Owner families in joint management and park work.
- Respect and apply the intent of joint management as laid out in the *TPWCA* and other agreements.

### Our Aims

- Strong joint management partnership with a focus on results.
- Satisfied joint management partners.
- Benefits to Traditional Owners.

## Background

### *Practical joint management*

Joint management success will be measured against achievement of the aims in this Plan and the satisfaction of the joint management partners. Ninety percent satisfaction is their agreed benchmark of success. The partners have agreed that joint management should succeed if the above principles are followed. A number of the principles are about building the relationship and the capacity of the partnership. As it is a new partnership, the process of joint management needs to allow both partners to continue to learn and grow. The decision-making framework recognises this need.

### *Sharing Cultural Knowledge*

Aboriginal cultural information will contribute to management plans and programs in a number of ways. Protecting areas or species of high cultural significance and sharing cultural information with visitors are just two examples. To Traditional Owners, this is not as simple as giving out information. It is important that Traditional Owners are recognised as the owners of cultural intellectual property and that they control how information is used.

*We have the chance to have Aboriginal skills  
and knowledge respected.*

### *Making Decisions*

All decision-making must be shared equitably by the joint management partners. This includes all decisions, from those that are easily made to those that require the most careful consideration. Decisions will be needed in relation to:

- Standard procedures and day-to-day activity such as weekly patrols and maintenance checks.
- Management program plans that are made for two or more years, usually reviewed annually, such as fire and weed programs.
- Development proposals.
- Policies and regulations such as a policy for commercial filming.
- The impact of higher-level government policies on the management of the reserve.

*Working together ... two different groups of people managing  
the park and learning from each other.*

Joint management principles call for traditional Aboriginal decision-making to be recognised and respected. For the reserve's Traditional Owners, this means that the old people, as the most important custodians of tradition, have the first and last say with respect to the land.



### *Dispute Resolution*

The Parks and Wildlife Service will make every effort to communicate with all Traditional Owners in relation to the management of the reserve. It is also important that Traditional Owners keep talking with each other to avoid disputes or misunderstanding. If the directions outlined in this part of the Plan are carried out, the joint management partners should enjoy a strong, friendly relationship with high levels of mutual respect and trust. The partners will make every effort to reach agreement when making decisions. From time to time it is possible that, for difficult decisions, ready agreement will not be reached even after respectful discussion and negotiation. The *TWPCA* requires this plan to say how disputes will be resolved. See directions 3.8 and 3.9 on page 19.

### *Role of Central Land Council*

The CLC played a major role in facilitating the preparation of this Plan. They will have an ongoing role in representing Traditional Owners' interests and helping the joint management partnership work. The CLC has the expertise and resources to continue facilitating joint management consultations and capacity-building activities and to monitor joint management processes.

### *Social and Economic Benefits*

Joint management should bring social and economic benefits to Traditional Owners. Joint management agreements require the Northern Territory Government to provide relevant opportunities. These include direct employment by the Parks and Wildlife Service, and employment through business contracts and private concessionary operations providing services to visitors. Traditional Owners need the capacity and skills to take advantage of such opportunities. The Parks and Wildlife Service will therefore make sure training is available to Traditional Owners in areas such as park management, tourism and business management.

*We want to work together to achieve the aims and goals  
for the future of our families.*

Rainbow Valley is an unstaffed reserve, currently managed as part of the Central District Parks operation based in Alice Springs. In the short to mid term, there is limited opportunity for Traditional Owners to be employed as rangers. However, at the time of this Plan's preparation, one of the reserve's Traditional Owners is employed as a trainee ranger at Central District Parks. There is also strong potential for Traditional Owners to gain contract work, maintaining or developing facilities. With more than 10 000 visitors to the reserve each year, Traditional Owners are also well positioned to provide visitor services on a commercial basis.

Periodic paid work and training in park management and development will also suit some Traditional Owners. Such opportunities are being eagerly taken up. The Flexible Employment Program works in partnership with Aboriginal community organisations and training providers. It provides for men and women, young and old to participate in the reserve's management. The program also assists people who want permanent jobs to be more competitive when applying for traineeships and ranger vacancies, as well as as helping to add to the capacity of individuals and organisations to take on commercial contracts.

It is a long-term goal for the Traditional Owners to play a leading role in day-to-day management of the reserve. For this to happen, the existing ranger camp may be improved or a new facility developed.

With other agencies, the Parks and Wildlife Service and the CLC can help Traditional Owners to develop tourism businesses. Some of the reserve's Traditional Owners already have experience in business ownership and management. Oak Valley Tours provides a cultural experience and camping facilities for national and international tourists. Traditional Owners have also been involved in the establishment of *Gunya Titjikala*, a cultural tourism venture near Titjikala community.

A number of government strategies drive Aboriginal employment and training activities. Aboriginal employment and training plans have also been developed in collaboration with the Northern and Central Land Councils, outlining approaches to bring about outcomes at regional and local levels.

### *Living on the Reserve*

Joint management agreements provide for Traditional Owners to live on parks and reserves as a means for them to more actively contribute to natural and cultural resource management. Traditional Owners, however, have said they do not want living area proposals considered for the reserve during the period of this Plan. Many Traditional Owners live on homelands within close proximity to the Reserve.

### *Traditional Resource Use*

Traditional Owners are also entitled under the *TPWCA* to use the natural resources of the land, to hunt wildlife and gather bush foods. The Traditional Owners believe that hunting will have too great an impact on a reserve this small and choose not to exercise their right to hunt. They will, however, gather bush foods and medicines on the reserve from time to time (see Sections 5 on page 23 and 6.3 on page 33).

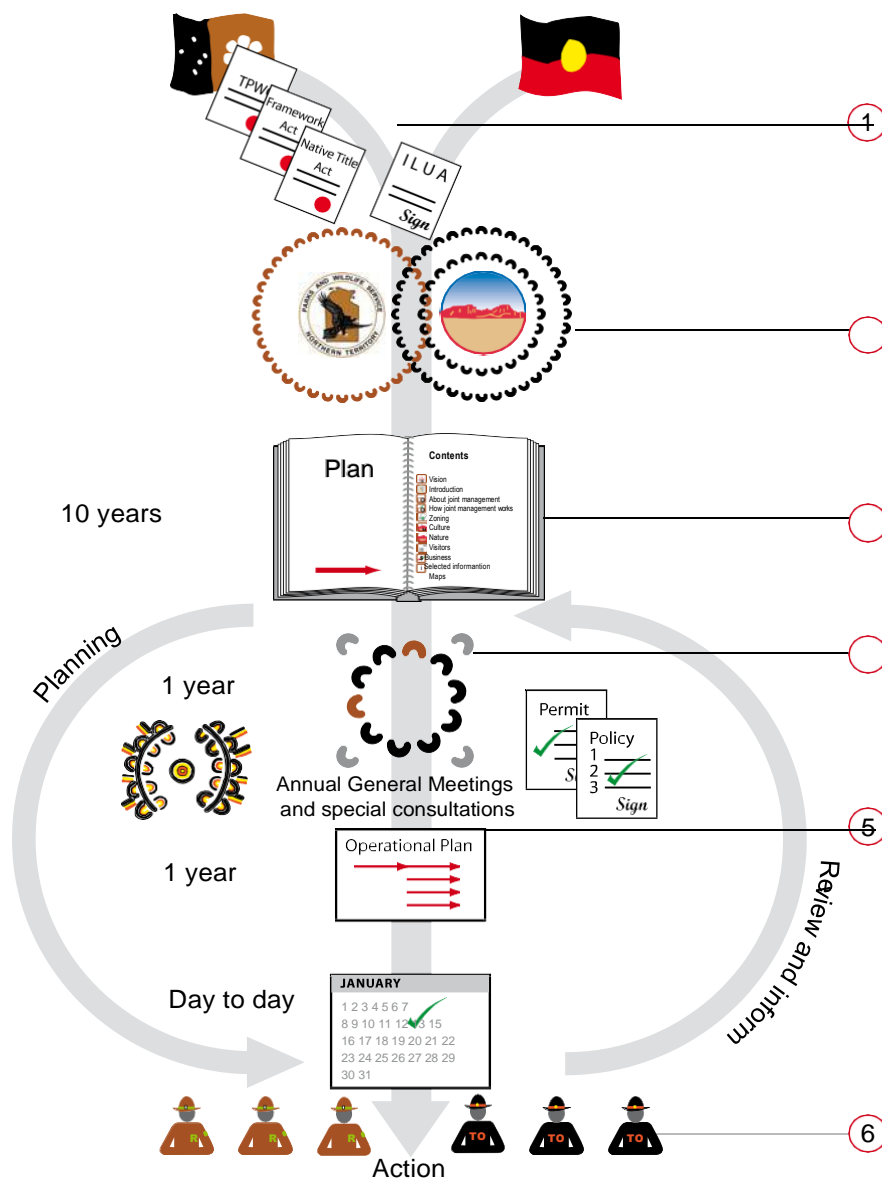
*We still want to walk around and talk about and gather bush foods with our kids, us and our sisters.*

## Directions

- 31** The joint management partners will see that the partnership grows and capacity continues to build by doing the following:
- Parks and Wildlife rangers will be required to achieve minimum standards of cross-cultural competency through appropriate training. Cultural education specific to this reserve will take place through 'culture days' on the reserve led by Traditional Owners.
  - Traditional Owners will be kept informed about management activities and issues through field days, the partners working together on management programs, quarterly reports and annual general meetings (AGM).
  - Every effort will be made to engage all Traditional Owner families.
  - Governance training will be offered to Traditional Owners.
  - Opportunities will be provided for Traditional Owners to exchange ideas and knowledge with other Aboriginal people engaged in joint management.
- 32** Traditional Owners will be respected as the owners of cultural information which will only be used for agreed purposes in accordance with protocols drafted by the CLC and endorsed by the joint management partners.
- 33** Management of this reserve will be influenced by joint management governance as it develops for other parks at regional and Territory levels. Different ways of doing joint management business may be introduced, including a more formal approach to decision-making if and when the partners see fit.
- 34** Decision-making at all levels will happen jointly and efficiently. The Traditional Owners will appoint a small informal committee to represent the interests of the full Traditional Owner group. The joint management partners will hold AGMs at which Traditional Owners may be represented by the committee or a larger group. The purpose of AGMs will be to:
- Review progress made in the reserve's management during the previous year, against the aims stated in this Plan.
  - Set agreed annual operational plans for the next year.
  - Measure the satisfaction of the joint management partners - see 3.7 on next page.
  - Review or develop policies and regulations.
  - Consider development and other high impact proposals.
- 35** Special consultations will be held with the committee or larger Traditional Owner group when decisions need to be made relating to urgent issues or proposals that should not be delayed until the next scheduled AGM. Instances requiring special consultations are identified in other parts of this plan.
- 36** Annual operational plans will be the means by which progress in implementing this Plan will be measured (see also Section 8.5 on page 55). These plans will document specific management objectives based on this joint management plan along with a schedule of management activity for each of the reserve's management programs. Operational plans and their annual review will also ensure that Traditional Owners' key interests listed here are properly considered:



- Getting joint management right.
  - Keeping people and culture strong.
  - Protecting the reserve's values.
  - Making sure visitors show respect and behave appropriately.
  - Providing safe and culturally appropriate activities.
  - Providing appropriate information.
  - Good relationships with others.
- 37** The partners' satisfaction will be measured each year before and as a part of AGMs using some or all of the following methods:
- Interviewing senior rangers and key Traditional Owners using questions to qualify perceptions and feelings relating how well the agreed joint management principles (above) have been applied.
  - Giving the same interview questions to the wider group of Traditional Owners to facilitate discussion.
  - Surveying selected partners to determine satisfaction levels against the agreed benchmark of 90 percent.
  - Applying *Most Significant Change Technique* or similar techniques with proven results in participatory monitoring and evaluation.
- 38** Should a dispute arise between the joint management partners that cannot be resolved amicably, the partners will jointly appoint an independent mediator to help facilitate a final decision.
- 39** The CLC will continue to support practical joint management, representing and supporting Traditional Owners' interests, facilitating consultations, assisting with joint management capacity-building activities, monitoring joint management processes and, if necessary, facilitating dispute resolution between Traditional Owners.
- 310** Independent evaluation of joint management processes and outcomes will be pursued if and when the partners agree and the means to do this effectively are identified.
- 311** There will be a thorough appraisal of the implementation of this Plan by the joint management partners toward the end of this Plan's term.
- 312** Training, employment and business outcomes for Traditional Owners will be actively pursued. Opportunities including direct and flexible employment, contracts and enterprise – and Traditional Owners' interests and capacity will be considered each year at AGMs and agreed, achievable plans set down. The Parks and Wildlife Service will see that training and business development support is available to Traditional Owners through other agencies when the Parks and Wildlife Service cannot directly assist.
- 313** Opportunities for paid participation of Traditional Owners in park management programs will be maximised. This may include on-the-job and accredited training activities carried out by training organisations.
- 314** Traditional Owners and Aboriginal organisations they support will be preferred contract service providers (see also section 8.1 on page 49).



## Joint management, decision making and planning

- 1 Legislation**  
 Joint management is set up under Northern Territory Law. Under the *Commonwealth Native Title Act* the Indigenous Land Use Agreement provides for joint management of the reserve.
- 2 Joint management partners**  
 The Northern Territory Government's Parks and Wildlife Service and the Traditional Owners of Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve.
- 3 Joint management plan**  
 An agreement between the joint management partners about managing the reserve together, for up to 10 years.
- 4 Shared decision making**  
 The joint management partners will have annual general meetings to prepare and review annual operational plans. There will also be special consultations with Traditional Owners – all Traditional Owners or a committee - for urgent decisions. The partners also approve policy and permits. Central Land Council help at meetings and consultations.
- 5 Operational plans**  
 Operational Plans: Annual plans that set out agreed activities, reviewed each year.
- 6 Day to day work**  
 Traditional Owners and rangers carry out agreed management under the joint management plan and operational plan

## 4. Zoning



### Our Aim

- To protect the reserve's values while providing for public use.

### Background

A zoning scheme indicates the management priority for specific areas within the reserve. Zoning ensures a balance between the need to protect important values and to provide for visitors. Zoning also provides a basis for future planning and development.

In developing the zoning scheme outlined in this Plan, the joint management partners looked at current and future visitor use areas along with areas of the reserve that are most important for conservation of cultural and natural values. In any zone, development will only proceed with appropriate protection of cultural and environmental values.

### Directions

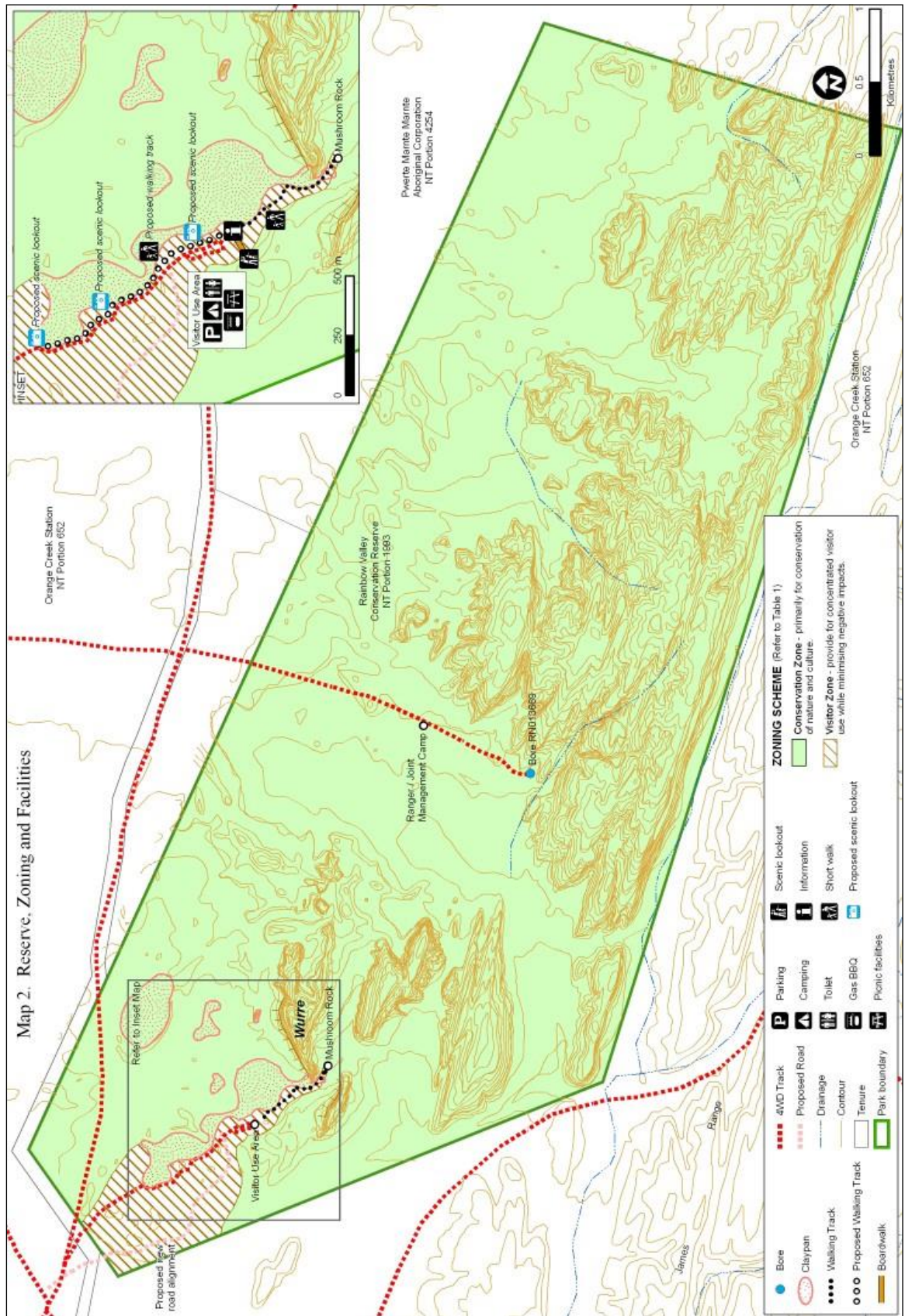
- 4.1** Management of the reserve will conform to the zoning scheme described here, summarised in Table 1 below and shown in Map 2.

*Table 1. Zoning scheme summary.*

	Visitor Zone	Conservation Zone
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provision for concentrated visitor use while minimising negative impacts.</li> <li>■ Provision for significant future development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Protection of natural and/or cultural values.</li> <li>■ Provision for controlled visitor use.</li> </ul>
<b>Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Conventional vehicle access.</li> <li>■ Constructed walking tracks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Public access by permit only or in connection with approved concession.</li> <li>■ Vehicle access restricted to existing service track.</li> </ul>
<b>Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Interpretation of the reserve's values.</li> <li>■ Picnicking.</li> <li>■ Camping.</li> <li>■ Short walks.</li> <li>■ Photography.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Management and cultural activities.</li> <li>■ Bushwalking under permit.</li> <li>■ Low-key commercial tourism.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parking, picnic and camping facilities.</li> <li>■ Toilets, walkways and viewing platforms.</li> <li>■ Shade shelters, visitor information and interpretive walks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ranger/joint management base.</li> <li>■ Other management facilities necessary to protect key values.</li> <li>■ Low key visitor facilities under terms of concession permit.</li> </ul>



Map 2. Reserve, zoning and facilities



## 5. Managing Cultural Heritage



### Looking after People and Country

*Culture defines who we are.  
Our traditions must be passed onto future generations in keeping with Aboriginal law.*

*We have to keep the language alive and keep the Dreaming going to keep the culture strong.*

### Introduction

This section addresses the interests of the joint management partners in relation to cultural values. For the reserve's Traditional Owners, it is vital to keep culture strong. Strong culture is based in connection to country and knowing country well — its creation stories, its plants and animals, and its language. Strong culture needs knowledge and connection to country to be passed on to the next generation. This makes it essential for families to have opportunities to visit country and teach young people their cultural inheritance. The reserve contains special places associated with creation stories. These must be carefully managed. The reserve also contains archaeological sites and artefacts that are valued by the Traditional Owners and the wider community.

### Principles for managing cultural heritage

- Aboriginal history relating to the reserve should be conserved and passed on to future generations through family.
- Cultural sites must be properly protected.
- Only Traditional Owners can speak for the country and culture.
- The Traditional Owners are the owners of their heritage — knowledge, art sites and artefacts. They should control how it is recorded and managed.
- Keeping culture alive means Traditional Owners are able to access country freely.
- The broader community also values Aboriginal cultural heritage. While respect for Traditional Owners' wishes is paramount, heritage management may involve the ideas and resources of others.
- The Burra Charter provides sound direction for cultural heritage conservation.

### Our Aim

The reserve's cultural heritage maintained and managed according to the wishes of the Traditional Owners and Territory and Commonwealth law.



## Background

### *Cultural Knowledge and History Stories*

Traditional Owners hold a large unwritten body of knowledge relating to the reserve. This aspect of cultural heritage includes stories relating to the Altyerre or creation time, oral histories of times before and after European settlement, and traditional ecological knowledge. This knowledge is central to Traditional Owners' cultural identity and they worry it may be lost as their old people pass on. They therefore want to retain it and hand it on to their children. As remembering and teaching culture is most effective on country, Traditional Owners need to be able to access the reserve freely. The ability to practice ceremony on country is becoming more important as the law holders become older.

Traditional Owners are keen to record traditional ecological knowledge in their own language, including traditional uses and species names. Some of the old knowledge is fading in peoples' memories so Traditional Owners are keen to engage with other Aboriginal people to help bring language and knowledge back into focus. They want to document this knowledge for the benefit of their young people, share it with visitors to improve their cultural understanding, and share it with rangers for wildlife conservation while protecting their cultural intellectual property.

Traditional Owners continue to hunt and gather traditional foods, medicines, and natural materials on their homelands. These activities also keep culture strong. Under the *TWPCA*, Aboriginal Traditional Owners are permitted to hunt, forage and gather resources in parks and reserves for traditional purposes. The reserve's Traditional Owners, however, have decided not to hunt on the reserve. They believe that, in a relatively small reserve as Rainbow Valley, hunting could compromise public safety, contribute to soil erosion and deplete local wildlife populations.

*It's important to keep our culture alive for the next generation.*





### *Art and Archaeological Sites*

The reserve is on the indicative list of the Register of the National Estate for its archaeological values. It contains a highly significant and comprehensive example of central Australian rock art that includes engraved rock, abraded grooves and painted motifs among more than forty recorded sites. Further evidence of a long history of occupation and use of the area by Aboriginal people includes extensive scatters of grindstones and other tools, quarries and camp sites. These sites are a tangible link to past generations and Traditional Owners have a responsibility under traditional law to see them protected.

The archaeological values of the reserve have been subject to various studies. The most recent study was done by June Ross between 1999 and 2003. The number and variation of the reserve's archaeological sites makes them important for future research.

*The Heritage Conservation Act of 1991* gives specific protection to archaeological sites and resources in the Northern Territory. Under the Act clearance must be given for works that may threaten prescribed archaeological places.

To date, management of the archaeological sites has limited access to specially permitted researchers and tour operators, and has closely monitored their behaviour. Removal of cattle from the area has reduced the threat to sites.

The main threat to the reserve's rock art is unauthorised, unguided visitation. Clambering over delicate engraved surfaces and touching rock art are just two ways in which people can damage sites. Natural processes, such as erosion of the soft Hermannsburg Sandstone, result in unavoidable deterioration of motifs. It is not practical to divert water flow with silica driplines or to use other direct conservation techniques.

All art sites need to be monitored regularly for rapid deterioration. Preservation of the artefact scatters is a priority with souveniring by unauthorised visitors being a significant threat. Many larger grindstones were removed before the area became a reserve and some of these are held by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory.

The archaeological sites are of very high interpretive interest. The Traditional Owners would like to operate commercial guided tours into these areas in the future.



*Traditional Owners talking about looking after culture with archaeologist June Ross during a field day in September, 2006.*

## *Sacred Sites*

The Traditional Owners see joint management as a way to strengthen sacred sites management by informing people about them and encouraging respect.

There are places on the reserve that the Traditional Owners associate with events of the Altyerre or creation time. Access to and knowledge relating to these sacred sites may be restricted under traditional law.

*This is our country. We belong here.*

Protection for places that are of cultural significance to Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory is afforded under overlapping legislation. The *Commonwealth Aboriginal Land Rights Act* (N.T.) 1976 (ALRA) gives legal recognition to areas which that Act terms “sacred sites” and defines as:

*“a site that is sacred to Aboriginals or is otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal tradition, and includes any land that, under a law of the Northern Territory, is declared to be sacred to Aboriginals or of significance according to Aboriginal tradition”.*

Complementary Northern Territory legislation, the *Northern Territory Sacred Sites Act* 1989 (NTASSA) also provides protection for all sites that fall within the scope of this definition. This protection is generally provided in the form of an Authority Certificate from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) in response to land use proposals. Both the NTASSA and the ALRA make illegal entry to, works on or use of sacred sites an offence.

Strong joint management will ensure that sacred sites are protected in accordance with Traditional Owners’ wishes. Under the ALRA the Central Land Council have a specific function to “assist Aboriginals in the taking of measures likely to assist in the protection of sacred sites” and under its established procedures will carry out this role in facilitating joint management.

Four sites on the reserve are listed on the AAPA register. Traditional Owners are especially concerned about visitors accessing two areas adjacent to the Visitor Zone. The claypan has important Altyerre associations and access will be restricted. Cultural restrictions also apply for the massif south-west of *Wurre*. It is the wish of Traditional Owners that there be no photography or filming of this massif. Public access and access to women, including female rangers, is restricted beyond Mushroom Rock.

The reserve has no significant non-Aboriginal heritage values.

*Stone tool flakes are commonly found in the area. Many grindstones have unfortunately been removed over the years.*



## Directions

- 51** The Traditional Owners will control Aboriginal cultural heritage management activities, research and information.
- 52** The joint management partners and CLC will, under the direction of the Traditional Owners, develop a cultural heritage management program for the reserve, providing for:
- Country visits and activities that will facilitate transmission of cultural knowledge to young Traditional Owners.
  - Consolidating existing information about the archaeological sites and artefacts.
  - Recording, monitoring and protecting archaeological sites and artefacts.
  - Identifying research and cultural heritage management gaps.
  - Training for Traditional Owners in cultural site management and interpretation.
  - Recording oral history and traditional knowledge.
- 53** Traditional Owners will be able to access all areas of the reserve. Practical arrangements will provide for Traditional Owner families to use the ranger camp.
- 54** Areas of the park may be temporarily closed to the public for purposes of traditional ceremony. Public notice of closures will be provided as far in advance as possible.
- 55** Access to culturally sensitive areas will be in accordance with the zoning scheme. The Parks and Wildlife Service will abide by gender restrictions in relation to access to culturally sensitive areas.
- 56** Provision is made for the Traditional Owners to operate commercial guided tours to cultural sites subject to concession agreements and the approval of the full Traditional Owner group.
- 57** The CLC will have sacred site clearance responsibility for all proposed works on the park. However the joint management partners may agree from time to time that a proponent may require an AAPA Authority Certificate under the NTASSA. Clearance may also be sought under the *Heritage Conservation Act* for works on places and objects protected under that legislation.
- 58** In accordance with the wishes of the Traditional Owners, commercial filming or photography of the massif southwest of the coloured cliffs of Rainbow Valley will not be permitted.
- 59** Information will be provided to visitors to help them learn about, respect and appreciate the reserve's cultural heritage.
- 5.10** Traditional Owners wishing to gather bush tucker or otherwise use the natural resources of the reserve may do so, subject to the permission of the full Traditional Owner group or Committee and conditions agreed by the joint management partners. Activities with a significant impact on the reserve's values, or that compromise visitor safety or enjoyment, will not occur. Traditional activities and their impacts will be monitored. See also section 6.3 on page 33.



## 6. Managing Natural Heritage



### Looking after Land and Wildlife

*When we look at the land, it's a part of us  
— not just a pretty sight.*

*It's about keeping country alive for future generations.*

### Introduction

This section of the Plan talks about protecting land, plants and animals. The reserve contains a priceless natural heritage that the joint management partners, along with the wider community, want to protect for future generations. The need to minimise environmental impacts and control threats to plants and animals is considered here.

The reserve's Traditional Owners see culture and nature as deeply interconnected. Cultural tradition, the land and its wildlife are interrelated. Joint management then, brings a new way of looking at natural resource management. Care and protection of natural values is as important as before but will occur with Aboriginal interests and knowledge of country merging with western scientific approaches.

### Principles for managing natural heritage

- Managing the natural values of the reserve needs to be considered together with managing cultural values and interests.
- Looking after country and wildlife should combine Traditional Owners' knowledge of country with rangers' scientific methods.
- Healthy land and wildlife needs the natural environment and ecological processes to be left undisturbed as much as possible.
- Good management of the reserve's natural values needs good knowledge of country and wildlife.
- Weeds and feral animals can seriously impact on healthy land and wildlife. They must be effectively managed, taking into account threats that may exist outside reserve boundaries.
- Fire is a natural part of the landscape. For healthy country and wildlife, fire must be carefully managed.
- The value of the reserve as a whole requires that its scenic values and natural character be kept intact.
- Naturally stable soils are important for protecting the reserve's landscape. Soil erosion resulting from poor management or development can threaten habitats.
- The reserve's water resources are a critical part of its ecosystems and maintaining their integrity is essential.
- Visitor education and control is essential to protect special values.
- Management decisions need to be mindful of long-term impacts when considering short-term objectives.

## 6.1 Landscape, Geology and Soils

### Our Aims

- The natural scenery and character of the reserve preserved.
- Soil erosion minimised and eroded areas rehabilitated.
- The reserve's landscape understood, respected and appreciated by visitors.

### Background

#### *Landscape*

The spectacular, coloured sandstone cliffs from which the area takes its non-Aboriginal name are the most striking feature of the reserve. Facing north-west, the white, yellow and orange surfaces glow brilliantly in the setting sun. The large claypans adjacent to the cliffs add to the area's landscape values. When water collects in the claypans, it mirrors the colours of the cliffs, creating a scene that is the reserve's most powerful visitor attraction.

While the Traditional Owners appreciate the natural beauty of this landscape, they also see it differently from non-Aboriginal people. Rather than being the result of geological processes, the landscape depicts the actions of ancestral beings during creation times. This perspective adds to the appreciation of the reserve's landscape and the importance of protecting it.

*Our country — it's not just a landscape, it's a living icon.*

It is vital to keep views of *Wurre* and the claypans unspoilt by development and the activities of visitors. To date, development on the reserve has been low key. In the construction of access, facilities and infrastructure, care has been taken to minimise visual and environmental impact. This approach should continue.

#### *Geology*

In scientific terms, the coloured cliffs and adjacent isolated rock outcrops are composed of Hermannsburg Sandstone estimated to be about 350 million years old. Mereenie Sandstone underlies the reserve and makes up most of the James Range to the south. Both rock types contain examples of curved and vertical joints, exposed white sandstone erosion surfaces, iron staining, honeycomb erosion and fossils. These sandstones are very soft. Their natural and archaeological features are easily marked and damaged.



*Honeycomb weathering in Hermannsburg Sandstone*

Minerals exploration has occurred on the reserve, although no mining has taken place. Two mining reserves, declared under Section 178 of the *Mining Act*, take in two areas of the reserve. Mining reserve RO 846 lies over the western portion of the reserve and RO 369 includes a small area inside the eastern boundary. The reserve's small area means that the impact of mining activity is likely to be significant. The Traditional Owners have expressed opposition to any form of exploration or mining activity on the reserve. Before granting a mining or petroleum interest in a park, the Northern Territory Minister for Mines is required to consult the joint management partners through the Minister for Parks and Wildlife.

Visitors to the reserve are interested in learning about the area's geology, landforms and Aboriginal creation stories.

### *Soils*

Most of the reserve's soils are windblown sands. These soils form the sand plain and scattered sand dunes across the north and west of the reserve. In some areas, the soils are highly susceptible to erosion. These areas include the sand dunes and ridges fringing the claypans, the aprons of fine soils around the sandstone outcrops, and the larger and steeper sand dunes. Previously uncontrolled visitor activity has caused damage to these areas. Vegetation cover has been removed, resulting in wind scour and considerable soil loss. The camel tours that used to pass through the reserve caused significant impacts in many areas. The original access road that closely follows the edge of the claypan is poorly located. It has altered natural drainage patterns and contributed to unstable soils for most of its length.

### **Directions**

- 6.1.1** The natural character of the reserve will be protected. Any development will be carefully sited, designed to be in harmony with the natural environment, and will not detract from the reserve's outstanding landscape and scenic values. As far as possible, developments will avoid major earthworks, excavations or other disturbances.
- 6.1.2** A new all-vehicle access track on the existing planned alignment will be developed as a priority and the original access track into the reserve will be closed and rehabilitated.
- 6.1.3** Signs will advise visitors to stay off the claypans and not climb or interfere with sandstone outcrops. Access on to the claypans will be subject to a permit for filming or research, or in relation to approved concessionary operations.
- 6.1.4** The Parks and Wildlife Service will seek to have a mining reserve (Reserve from Occupation) declared over the entire Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve.
- 6.1.5** Materials such as rock, sand and gravel may be extracted from within the reserve in small quantities for works on the reserve, subject to the approval of the Traditional Owners and the laws of the Northern Territory, and provided impacts are controlled and minimal.



## 6.2 Water Resources

### Our Aims

- Ground and surface waters free from contamination.
- Natural processes relating to surface and ground waters maintained.

### Background

The reserve is located in Australia's arid zone. Rainfall is highly variable and periods of drought are common. The median annual rainfall for nearby Alice Springs is 286 mm. Evaporation is extremely high at more than 3000 mm per year.

There are no permanent surface waters within the reserve and few ephemeral waterholes in the eastern James Range. There is one rockhole on the Reserve that holds water for a long time after rain. This site is culturally significant. In old times it would have enabled Aboriginal people to use the area after rain, to harvest and grind the plentiful grass seed and create the area's rock art that can be seen today.

*The Reserve's claypans are significant places for their cultural and natural value*



The reserve overlies important underground aquifers in the Mereenie and Hermannsburg Sandstones. These aquifers, which yield good quality water, are recharged by the movement of ground water from both recent and ancient rainfalls, and from seepage from nearby creeks.

The reserve is located within the Alice Springs Water Control District and is subject to provisions under the *Water Act*. It is not known whether the reserve's ecosystems could be affected by ground water levels. Ground water levels in the reserve could be affected by uncontrolled extraction for nearby land uses such as mining, horticulture, pastoralism or public water supply. As the aquifers are close to the surface, local contamination from toilets and fuel storage is a risk if not carefully managed.

There is one bore in the reserve equipped with a diesel motor. Bore RN 13669 yields about 1.25 litres per second of very high quality water suitable for human consumption. This bore supplies the nearby ranger camp. Under the terms of a long-standing agreement, the neighbouring land holder, Orange Creek Station, pumps large amounts of water from this bore to cattle watering points outside the reserve. The Parks and Wildlife Service maintains the bore.

The claypans adjacent to *Wurre* have significant value both culturally and as a wetland environment. They are a good example of large intermittent freshwater lakes that attract a variety of nomadic waterfowl after rain. This habitat is significant due to the presence of a rare plant (see Section 6.3 on page 33). When wet, the claypan environment is very vulnerable to damage if people, vehicles or large animals traverse it.

## Directions

- 6.2.1** Any fuel storage facilities will incorporate appropriate spill protection measures.
- 6.2.2** Sealed system toilets will be installed at the ranger camp and visitor area to reduce the risk of ground water contamination.
- 6.2.3** Arrangements with Orange Creek Station regarding use of Bore RN 13669 will be monitored and the terms of use reviewed.
- 6.2.4** Access onto the claypans when wet will not be permitted under any circumstances.

## 6.3 Native Plants

### Our Aims

- The natural diversity of plant communities and species maintained.
- Knowledge and understanding of the reserve's flora improved, including cultural uses and values.
- The most significant species recorded, monitored and protected.

### Background

The reserve is an important bush food place and the Traditional Owners have considerable knowledge about traditional uses of the area's native plants. This includes knowledge about bush tucker and medicines, tools, ceremonial uses and other cultural uses. This knowledge is part of an ancient tradition and the Traditional Owners want to pass it on to their young people. They also want to share some information with visitors as an expression of their ongoing connection to this country. The Traditional Owners are entitled to use the natural resources of the reserve for cultural purposes and they will continue to do so to keep their culture strong.

*It's an important bush tucker and bush medicine area.*

For its small area, the reserve contains a remarkable diversity of plant communities and species. Over 400 plant species have been recorded in the reserve. In the western part accessible to visitors, the low-lying claypans, sandplains and dunes support a mainly sparse vegetation cover dominated by acacia shrubs and spinifex with pockets of coolibah. These communities run up to the edge of the James Range sandstone where Mulga and Hill Mulga are dominant. Desert Oak is more dominant in the sandy dunes and plains east of *Wurre*. Creek-line, mallee and cypress-pine communities can also be found on the reserve. The dune and claypan habitat types are particularly important because, at present, they are poorly represented within the Territory parks system.



*White Spider-flower, Grevillea albiflora*



According to White et al (2000) the reserve's following species have special conservation value:

- *Eremophila Rainbow Valley* is a low-lying sandplain shrub with a highly restricted range. It is not protected in any other reserve at present and is the subject of ongoing monitoring in the reserve, in particular the species' response to fire. It is listed as vulnerable at the national level under the *Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*.
- *Daviesia arthropoda* is a shrub that grows on sand dunes in the reserve and is considered rare at the national level. It is known nationally from only a few highly specific habitats. In central Australia, it is also reserved in Watarrka and Uluru National Parks.
- *Atriplex sturti* is a saltbush which, in the Northern Territory, is known only from Rainbow Valley where it grows on the claypan margins.
- White Spider-Flower, *Grevillea albiflora*, is a tall shrub that grows to a height of eight metres and is not reserved elsewhere in the Northern Territory.
- The Samphire *Tecticornia verrucosa*, a dark green fleshy-leaved plant, is found on the reserve's claypans. This reserve lies at the eastern edge of its known range.

Curly pod Wattle,  
*Acacia sessiliceps*



Areas of the reserve are in varying stages of recovery from the past impacts of cattle, camels, donkeys, rabbits, fires and people. Until the reserve was fenced in 1985, cattle frequently grazed and trampled the sandplains and alluvial flats.

Protection of the reserve's species requires knowledge of what species exist and where they live, aspects of their ecology, and threats within their environment. In 1997, the vegetation of the reserve was mapped using biophysical methods. This involved mapping on the basis of distinct biophysical characteristics such as vegetation, soils, landforms, slope and aspect. With computer-based geographic information systems, rangers are able to read and analyse this data to carefully plan action to control the threat to important species and species diversity posed by wildfire, weeds, feral animals and human activity.

Biophysical data also provides a platform for monitoring flora and fauna over the long term. For this reserve, 45 different vegetation units have been mapped on a scale of 1:50000. Vegetation communities change over time. Keeping biophysical data accurate and useful therefore requires that field surveys are repeated and data sets are updated from time to time.

## Directions

- 6.3.1** Traditional names and uses of plant species will be recorded by the Traditional Owners. This information may be shared with visitors in accordance with protocols for the use of indigenous cultural and intellectual property. See also Direction 3.2
- 6.3.2** As Traditional Owners see fit, the cultural values of vegetation will be incorporated into biophysical data sets to assist management decision-making.
- 6.3.3** The impact of traditional harvest of plant foods and materials will be monitored and managed to lessen impacts, if necessary.
- 6.3.4** The reserve's diversity of flora will be protected through continued strategic management of weeds, feral animals and fire. (See Sections 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7.)
- 6.3.5** The integrity of biophysical data sets will be maintained by resampling vegetation and updating data as necessary.
- 6.3.6** Plant species of highest cultural and/or conservation value will be subject to dedicated monitoring and protection from threats.



*Tecticornia verrucosa* is a samphire that grows on the reserve's claypans



## 6.4 Native Animals

### Our Aims

- The park's natural diversity of fauna protected.
- Knowledge of the park's fauna improved.

### Background

The fauna of Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve is characteristic of the region and the diversity of habitats found within the reserve. The claypan and sandplain habitats are especially valuable as a part of the Territory's protected area system. Fauna records for the reserve to date include 110 bird species, 20 mammal species, 46 species of reptile and three species of frog. Relatively common species such as the emu, bats, dingo and honey ant have special cultural meaning for Traditional Owners.

The Black-flanked Rock-wallaby, *Petrogale lateralis*, is the only mammal species recorded with a conservation listing under legislation. It is listed near threatened under the *TPWCA* and vulnerable under the *Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*. Bat species known from the reserve include Gould's Wattleed Bat, *Chalinolobus gouldii*, and the Lesser Long-Eared Bat, *Nyctophilus geoffroyi*. The Euro, *Macropus robustus*, is probably the most commonly seen native mammal. Seven non-native species have been recorded (see Section 6.6 on page 40). The sandy habitats of the reserve give promise that one of Central Australia's most intriguing animals, the Marsupial Mole, *Notoryctes typhlops*, may one day be discovered in the reserve.

Of the birds recorded, many are associated with the fire-sensitive open woodland and shrubland habitats. The flowering stands of *Grevillea* and *Eromophila* on the ranges are prime breeding habitat for migratory Black, Brown and Pied Honeyeaters. The Canegrass *Zygochloa paradoxa*, and mature spinifex communities that fringe the reserve's claypans, are important habitat for the White-winged Fairy-wren, an attractive and rarely seen species.

The Black-flanked Rock-wallaby, *Petrogale lateralis*





There are also reports of the Scarlet-chested Parrot, *Neophema splendida*, being seen in the reserve. The Grey Falcon, Redthroat and Red-tailed Black Cockatoo are listed as lower risk near threatened under the *TPWCA*. The Australian Bustard and Emu are listed as vulnerable in the Northern Territory.

The claypans are habitat for some of the reserve's most interesting species. After rain, waterbirds such as the Grey Teal, Australasian Grebe, Black-winged Stilt and Red-necked Avocet are common. Also appearing in the claypan waters, the shield shrimp, *Triops australiensis*, is a remarkable small crustacean whose life cycle is fascinating to many visitors. The claypans are also home to the Trilling Frog, *Neobatrachus centralis*, a burrowing species that may spend most of its lifetime under the claypan, coming to the surface only after rain.

The reserve's rich reptile fauna includes six species of monitor lizard, ten gecko species, fifteen skink species and five species of dragons including the iconic Thorny Devil, *Moloch horridus*. Only the Centralian Carpet Python, *Morelia bredli*, has any special conservation listing. It is listed lower risk near threatened under the *TPWCA*.

Fauna surveys were first carried out on the reserve in 1986. Vegetation mapping of the reserve in 1997 has enabled systematic sampling of the reserve's fauna by vegetation unit. This work has added to the reserve's species list as well as understanding of species-habitat relationships. This data helps inform decisions to protect the reserve's biological diversity.

While the Traditional Owners are entitled to hunt animals in the reserve, they believe the environmental impact of hunting would be too great for what is a small reserve. They wish that no hunting take place in the reserve.

## Directions

- 6.4.1** The reserve's natural diversity of fauna will be protected through continued control of weeds, feral animals and fire. (See Sections 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7 on pages 38-44.)
- 6.4.2** Research, survey and monitoring of the reserve's fauna will continue, incorporating the combined knowledge and methods of the joint management partners. The fauna survey program based on vegetation units will continue and biophysical data sets will be updated accordingly. Species of very high cultural and/or conservation value, identified as living on the reserve, will be given particular protection.
- 6.4.3** There will be no hunting on the reserve.
- 6.4.4** Traditional stories relating to animals of the reserve will be recorded and may be shared with visitors when appropriate, and in accordance with protocols for the use of indigenous cultural and intellectual property. See Direction 3.2 on page 18.

## 6.5 Weeds

### Our Aim

- The impact of weeds on the native plants, animals and natural environment of the reserve minimised.

### Background

Weeds are plants that have no natural belonging to a place. They can have a marked impact on the natural environment. In parks and reserves, it is important to control and eradicate these plants where possible. This is because weeds can displace native plants, reduce food for native animals and upset the natural balance between fire and habitat. Their impact on the biological diversity of an area can be disastrous. Weeds can also annoy people and reduce the aesthetic character and overall value of a landscape.

The reserve's Traditional Owners share all these concerns with their management partners. One direct consequence of weeds they have noticed is a decline in traditional bush foods.

*Years ago, before buffel, we used to dig for yalka (bush onion). Now we can't find any.*

The reserve is relatively weed-free. To keep it this way, weed control must continue to be a major priority.

To be effective weed control activity on the reserve must be strategic and follow well-considered long and short term plans. Weed management strategies are reviewed every few years to establish guidelines for annual action plans. Although other weed species are present, only buffel grass, Mossman River grass and caltrop have so far deserved management attention.

*Buffel grass is an aggressive invasive species that can take the place of native vegetation if not managed.*



Caltrop, or three-cornered jack, is mainly a weed of annoyance that causes little environmental impact. It grows mainly in areas visited by people and is relatively easily controlled. Mossman River grass is a close relative of buffel grass. Although a more serious weed than caltrop, Mossman River grass is also generally confined in the reserve to areas visited by people.

Buffel grass, *Cenchrus ciliaris*, is widespread in central Australia. It is an aggressive invader that is very damaging to natural ecosystems. Its impacts relate to fire and to the physical exclusion and competition with native species.

The past control of buffel grass at Rainbow Valley has been a strategic process. Detailed vegetation mapping and survey of the park has allowed the areas with high biodiversity values to be defined. These areas have been subject to focussed effort. Other consideration before a control program was initiated on the park included assessing the density and distribution of buffel both in the park and areas surrounding the reserve. The regional biodiversity values of the park, and the possibility of spread across land tenures was also considered. Control on the park is catchment-based and systematic. It has led to significant decreases in the density and distribution of buffel grass in the reserve. Although permanent eradication of the weed from the park will not be possible, it is envisaged that it will be possible to reduce the intensity of control effort in the future.

## Directions

**6.5.1** Management of weeds will continue to be strategic and take a long term approach. Management strategies and annual action plans will give particular attention to:

- Effective and efficient survey and monitoring.
- Practical weed control methods.
- Keeping areas of special conservation or cultural value weed-free.
- Practices to minimise weeds being brought into the reserve.
- Traditional Owners' cultural concerns.
- Employment for Traditional Owners.



## 6.6 Feral Animals

### Our Aim

- The impact of feral/introduced animals on the native plants, animals and natural environment of the reserve minimised.

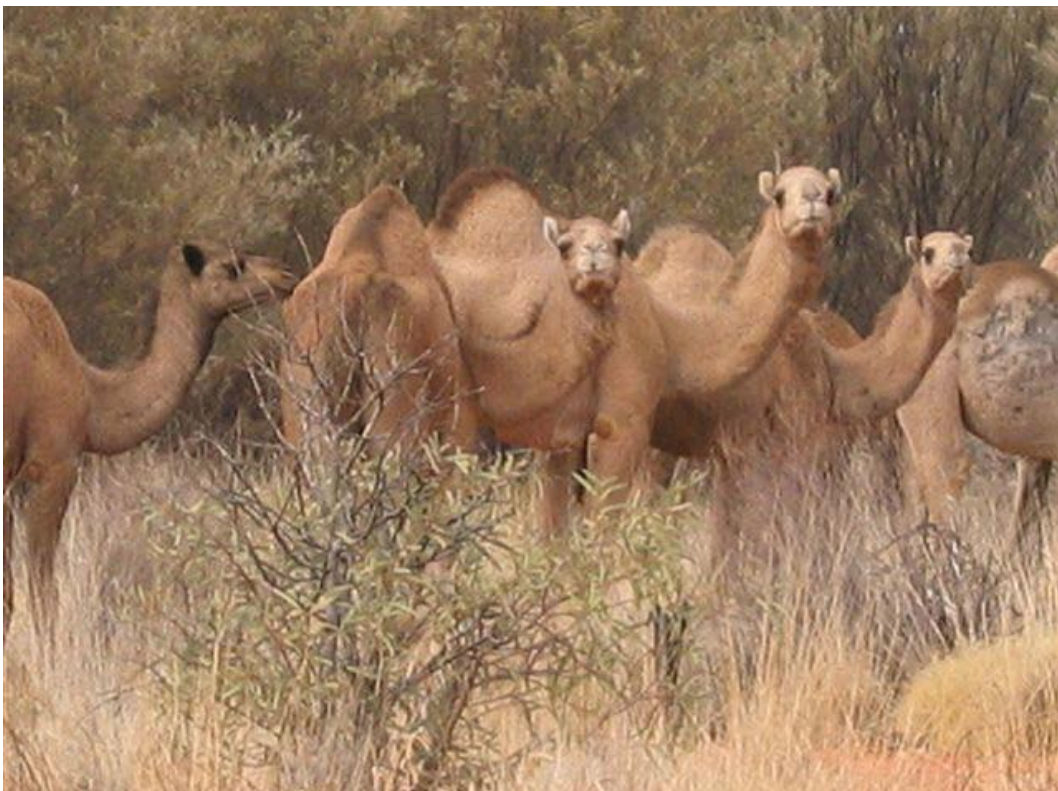
### Background

Feral animals are animals that have no natural belonging to a place. Due to the environmental and ecological damage they cause, it is important to control and eradicate them from reserves where possible. Feral animals known to have existed in the reserve include cattle, camels, horses, donkeys, rabbits, wild dogs, foxes, house mice and cats. Large grazing animals and rabbits compete with native animals for food and water, damage traditional bush foods, cause soil erosion and can foul waterholes and damage cultural sites. Predators such as dogs, cats and foxes can have disastrous impacts on populations of small and medium-sized reptiles and mammals. The Traditional Owners have historical associations with camels, but nonetheless would like to see them excluded from the reserve.

Since the reserve was fenced in 1986, the occurrence of large grazing animals within its boundaries has been rare. Camel tours continued in the reserve into the mid 1990s. Since then, applications to operate camel tours under licence have been refused due to soil erosion and weed spread caused by the animals. Wild camel numbers on surrounding country are relatively low. Camels and cattle occasionally break through the reserve's fences but are usually quickly removed, often with the cooperation of neighbouring landholders.

Feral cats and foxes are difficult to control. Populations in central Australia are generally very sparse. No effective broadscale control for feral cats has yet been discovered. Fox control is costly and must be matched strongly to conservation goals. It is also impossible using current best methods to control foxes without impacting on dingos.

*Camels occur in the local area and can break through boundary fences into the reserve.*



Since Rabbit Calicivirus Disease (RCD) arrived in central Australia in the early 1990s, rabbits have been scarce or non-existent in the reserve. Prior to RCD rabbits caused significant damage to the reserve and were the likely cause of erosion problems around the base of the cliffs. Rabbits have been found in the *Daviesia arthropoda* rare plant community and could threaten this local population.

Visitors may only bring pets into the reserve with a Parks and Wildlife Service permit, issued only in special circumstances.

### **Directions**

- 6.6.1** The reserve will be monitored for the presence of feral animals. Cost effective controls agreed by the joint management partners will be employed when appropriate.
- 6.6.2** Stock-proof boundary fences will be maintained to a high standard.
- 6.6.3** The joint management partners will work closely with the Orange Creek neighbours to keep cattle out of the reserve.
- 6.6.4** The joint management partners may approve applications to operate camel tours in the reserve, provided that protection of the natural and cultural values of the reserve can be fully assured.

## 6.7 Managing Fire

### Our Aims

- Minimise the damaging impacts of fire on the native plants, animals and natural environment of the reserve.
- Minimise the risk of wildfires threatening people and property.
- Improved understanding about fire in the landscape, including traditional Aboriginal fire management practices.

### Background

Fire has long been a part of the central Australian environment and has played a major part in shaping the region's flora and fauna. For countless generations, Aboriginal people used fire as a tool to manage the landscape and assist hunting and foraging. Aboriginal burning resulted in a patchwork of vegetation communities at different stages of recovery from fire. This effectively meant large wildfires were few and habitat diversity was promoted.

When pastoralism became a major use of the land, the effect upon pre-existing fire patterns was dramatic. Grazed areas had less fuel and acted as firebreaks for adjacent ungrazed country. At the same time, outright fire prevention became a goal. As a result, higher fuel loads built up over extensive areas that were less heavily grazed. This led to large and intense wildfires, usually started by lightning. A landscape with large areas of vegetation in similar stages of regeneration was created, with less diversity of habitats.

For many years, fire management has been a key program for conserving the reserve's biodiversity. Two approaches have been taken. First, firebreaks are created around areas of high biological value by burning fuel in a highly controlled way. Second, patchy burning is carried out in the reserve to promote diversity and reduce the risk of wildfires burning large areas in single events. Fuel is also reduced around visited areas to reduce risk to people and property. Firebreaks may also be cleared by grader.

*Controlled fuel reduction burn*





Under joint management, rangers and Traditional Owners will work side by side, integrating knowledge and practices to protect the reserve's values from wildfire. Rangers' patch-burning methods have largely mimicked traditional approaches.

*The old people were careful and just burnt small bits here and there.*

In recent years, fire management on the reserve has adopted a strategic approach with annual action plans being directed by a strategic plan that is reviewed every few years.

Lightning is a common cause of wildfires. Summer wildfires can be very destructive and back-burning from firebreaks is usually the only way of controlling them. Wildfires on the reserve are fought and extinguished if possible.

It has been found that vegetation regenerates better if burning takes place after rain, rather than at times of very low soil moisture. Where possible, prescribed burning is undertaken within a few days of rain. This approach also protects the surface soil structure.

By mapping fires and monitoring the recovery of vegetation after fire, the relationship between different types of fire and vegetation is becoming better understood. In recent years, spatial and other data relating to fires in the reserve has been merged with the reserve's biophysical data. With this data, fire management planning and decision-making is based on sound information; fuel loads can be estimated, fire exclusion areas identified and firebreaks planned.

A fire regime is defined as the pattern of fire in regard to intensity, seasonality and frequency. In time, the detailed habitat data recorded through biophysical mapping will also assist monitoring of vegetation recovery and improve understanding of the effects of different fire regimes on vegetation types. Fire can also be used with other methods to manage weeds such as buffel grass.

Fire can enter the park from neighbouring land. It can also originate in the park and enter neighbouring land. Fire protection is then a matter for communication and cooperation with neighbouring land holders.

Visitors are permitted to have fires only in fireplaces provided.

## Directions

**6.7.1** The joint management partners will continue to take a strategic approach in managing fire. The general direction of fire management will look ahead at least two years and up to five years. Action plans will be agreed each year. Fire management planning and action will consider each of the following:

- Protecting people, personal property and park facilities from fire.
- Protecting rare and/or fire-sensitive plants and communities from fire.
- Protecting from fire sites and areas of the reserve identified by Traditional Owners for cultural reasons.
- The interests and involvement of the reserve's neighbours.

- Mapping fires and otherwise maintaining spatial and other data that will inform sound fire management decision-making and help understanding of fire-habitat relationships.
  - Dividing up areas of high fuel loads to reduce the chance of large wildfires.
  - Reducing fuel and/or maintaining firebreaks on boundary areas to prevent wildfires entering the park from outside.
  - Standard procedures for planning and conducting prescribed burns.
  - Protocols in the event of a wildfire, including seeking the advice and involvement of Traditional Owners.
  - Maintenance of fire management equipment.
  - Training requirements and competency standards for Parks and Wildlife Service staff and participating Traditional Owners.
  - Communicating essential fire management or fire protection messages to visitors.
- 6.7.2** In the Visitor Zone, open fires will be restricted to provided fire containment facilities only.
- 6.7.3** In the Conservation Zone, camp fires may be permitted subject to conditions to minimise impacts and risk of wildfire. (see Section 4 on page 21).

## 7. Managing Visitors



### Sharing the Reserve

*It's okay for people to go there, as long as they look after that place - and themselves.*

### Introduction

This section of the Plan talks about managing for visitors. Traditional Owners enthusiastically welcome visitors to the reserve. They want very much to share their country and culture. They also want visitors to respect the area's values, both cultural and natural, and to learn about and enjoy the Reserve safely. The joint management partners believe good visitor information is a key to those outcomes. They also want visitors to have well maintained facilities befitting the reserve's character.

### Principles for managing visitors — what we believe is important:

- Visitors will be encouraged to enjoy the reserve in ways that respect and protect cultural and natural values.
- Visitors should have opportunities to learn about the values for which the reserve has been set aside. Appropriate information for visitors enhances their experience and encourages appropriate behaviour.
- The safety of park visitors is of primary importance.
- The reserve's zoning scheme will be the basis for regulating visitor access.
- Well designed facilities and infrastructure protects reserve values and promotes positive visitor experiences.
- In planning visitor facilities, equity of use including gender and physical impairment should be considered.
- Liaison with the tourism industry can help promotion and management of visitor activities on the reserve.
- Monitoring visitor numbers, characteristics, activities and satisfaction helps sound management planning.



*Interpretive signage for visitors at the reserve*

## Our Aim

- Visitors enjoying the reserve safely and with respect for the area's values.

## Background

### *Existing Use and Facilities*

Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve is a significant regional tourism attraction. Since the mid 1990s more than 10 000 people have visited the reserve each year. Most visitors are independent travellers and on average spend about one hour on the reserve. Many come in the late afternoon to revel in and take photographs of the famous spectacle of sunset on *Wurre*. About half the reserve's visitors take the thirty minute return walk to Mushroom Rock to further enjoy the scenery including remarkable formations in the sandstone outcrops.

Visitor facilities are low-key. They include parking for 18 vehicles, wood and gas barbecues for about six groups and one pit toilet. A short track from the car park leads visitors to an information shelter where a short walk along an elevated boardwalk leads to a dune-top viewing platform with bench seating and interpretive signs. The joint management partners would like to install improved directional signage and more shade shelters in the day-use area during the term of this plan. Surveys in 2001 found that visitors were highly satisfied with the facilities and their experience of the reserve.

Of about sixteen tour companies that bring visitors to the reserve, four or five visit regularly and stay for about one hour. These are mainly smaller, local operators. It is important that tour operators have a sound understanding of the reserve's cultural values and are able to pass on accurate and appropriate information to their clients.

Many visitors are inspired to visit the reserve to photograph the well-known images of *Wurre*. After rain especially when the claypans are filled with water, photographers flock to the area. In trying to capture the claypan in the foreground, visitors often ignore signs advising them to not walk on the claypan. This is a significant environmental and cultural issue that may be solved with better interpretation and by building a facility to provide the views of *Wurre* that visitors so eagerly seek.

*Signs are necessary to ask visitors to stay away from sensitive areas.*



*We welcome people with open arms but they need to respect our heritage. They need to show the same respect we would show if we went to their country or home.*

Rangers currently offer weekly camp fire talks to visitors during the tourist season. This type of activity could be offered by Traditional Owners on a commercial basis. Static visitor information is provided in the information shelter, a sign at the lookout and signs on the walk to Mushroom Rock. Interpretation focuses on the geology and landforms of the area. Traditional Owners believe the following key messages and themes communicated to visitors would help their appreciation of the reserve while promoting appropriate behaviour and safety:

- Visitors are welcome.
- The reserve is alive with cultural values.
- Respect our land and culture.
- Fascinating personal histories of Traditional Owners.
- How joint management works.
- Stay safe and don't climb the rocky outcrops.

About 70 percent of visits take place between June and August. Camping at the day-use/ camping area is popular at these times and it is not uncommon for available camping space to be filled during the mid-year holiday period. If demand increases, consideration may need to be given to expanding or relocating the camp ground during the term of this plan. Traditional Owners are interested in providing a commercial camping service within or close to the reserve.

## **Access**

Access to the reserve is via a 22 kilometre unsealed road off the Stuart Highway. This road is suitable for conventional vehicles driven with care. Vehicle access within the reserve is a 1.4 kilometre track that winds around the southern edge of the claypan system. The internal access track is four-wheel drive standard. Plans are in place to re-align it away from the claypan edge and to upgrade the track to conventional vehicle standard.

There is one marked walking track in the reserve, which leads from the information shelter to Mushroom Rock. Intrepid bushwalkers occasionally want to explore areas of the reserve further east of *Wurre*.

Special access may be allowed within parks and reserves under By-law 8 of the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-laws. The permitting process provides the means by which conditions and routes can be communicated to bushwalkers so that culturally sensitive sites can be avoided in accordance with Traditional Owners' wishes. Permits may be issued that are flexible in terms of group membership and timeframe in which walks take place. No fee is payable for these permits. Traditional Owners do not want details of culturally sensitive areas presented in this plan.

*Aboriginal people feel responsible if accidents happen on our land.*



Rainbow Valley is a relatively safe place for visitors. Climbing sandstone outcrops and taking extended walks in hot weather are potential hazards. Visitor information advises against these activities. Traditional Owners are also concerned people accessing cultural sites without proper authority.

Weddings and other public gatherings are occasionally held at the reserve. Such activities are subject to permits issued under *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-Laws*.

## Directions

- 7.1** Visitor access, activities and facilities within the reserve will be managed and developed according to this plan's zoning scheme.
- 7.2** When funds become available, an additional walking track will be developed west from the parking area to a lookout facility. The site and design selected will provide superb views of *Wurre* with the claypan in the foreground, while protecting cultural and natural values. (See Map 2.)
- 7.3** Bushwalkers wanting to explore the remote areas of the reserve will be permitted in line with the zoning scheme. The Parks and Wildlife Service will issue By-law 8 permits under the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act. Permit conditions will be set by the joint management partners.
- 7.4** Existing visitor information will be reviewed and improved, incorporating the key messages and themes stated above. Signs will advise visitors to not access culturally sensitive places such as the claypan. In accordance with protocols for the use of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property, words and language of the Traditional Owners will be used in visitor information to enhance visitors' appreciation of *Wurre* and the area as a place of important Aboriginal values. See Direction 3.2
- 7.5** The joint management partners will provide tour operators using the reserve with information to assist them and make sure that what is imparted to their clients is accurate and appropriate.
- 7.6** The reserve's Traditional Owners will be encouraged to take up commercial tourism opportunities including camp fire talks, camp ground hosting, camp ground maintenance and cultural tours.
- 7.7** The parking/camping area may be expanded to accommodate increasing visitor pressures or to provide a better visitor experience. If feasible, camping will be provided for at another site within or near the reserve on a commercial basis and the existing area will be for day-use only.
- 7.8** Public gatherings on the reserve will be subject to permits issued under By-Law 25 with guidelines permitting normal use only.

*This plan proposes more walking and viewing opportunities for visitors*





## 8. Managing Business



*We need to have a final say on how our product is marketed, including images.*

*We want to build relationships with anyone and everyone that can assist.*

### Introduction

This section of the Plan addresses the joint management partners' interests relating to good relations with neighbours and partners, including people in the tourism and film industries. This section also looks at the business of managing operational resources and other activities important for effective management, including engaging stakeholders, administering commercial operations and promoting the reserve. Good management decisions need good information so this section also looks at the business of research, survey and monitoring.

### Principles of effective business management—what we believe is important:

- Adequate staffing, financial and operational resources are basic for effective management.
- Progress is achieved by competent, well-trained staff working towards outcomes.
- Appropriate and well-managed commercial enterprise can contribute to the local economy, enhance opportunities for visitors and reduce visitor impacts.
- The public image of the reserve must be in keeping with the reserve's vision.
- Public support for the reserve is important and engaging stakeholders and the broader public in the reserve's management helps deliver good outcomes.
- Research, survey and monitoring of natural and cultural resources makes for better informed management decisions.

## 8.1 Management Resources and Operations

### Our Aim

- The aims of this plan achieved with adequate resources efficiently used.

### Background

Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve is an unstaffed reserve, currently managed as part of the Parks and Wildlife Service's Central District Parks operations, based in Alice Springs. The resources for the reserve — including staff, funds and capital resources such as vehicles — are shared among the other parks and reserves of the district. The reserve is also part of the Northern Territory parks system funded by the Northern Territory Government. Funding to manage the reserve and develop facilities are then, subject to priorities for all parks and priorities set by the Northern Territory Government across all program areas.

The reserve is visited by rangers at least weekly during the cooler months when visitor activity is highest and less frequently at other times. At the time of this Plan being prepared, nine rangers are working in Central District Parks. Three permanent positions are filled by Aboriginal people. One of these is a Traditional Owner of the reserve. Two are trainee rangers.

The Parks and Wildlife Service aims to have a professional ranger work force. This requires appropriate recruitment, training, mentoring and performance appraisal programs. The service has a long-term goal of increasing the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal people in the ranger work force, including career progression.

The Parks and Wildlife Service also offers periodic casual employment, and training opportunities, to Traditional Owners of parks and reserves. The flexibility of this program appeals to Traditional Owners. It builds relations between the partners and brings about valuable knowledge and skills exchange.

### *We want our own people working on land.*

Managing the reserve remotely is costly and joint management is an opportunity to create new efficiencies. In time it is hoped that management programs for the reserve can be partly or fully contracted out to local Aboriginal businesses with benefits to Traditional Owners. Examples of possible contracts include seasonal servicing of visitor facilities, maintaining fence lines and building new infrastructure. Joint management agreements provide for preference to be given to local Aboriginal people and businesses that apply for contract work.

Joint management also brings opportunities to supplement normal government funding and to fund additional projects from external grants programs.

A ranger camp with basic amenities is located in the Conservation Zone. Its increasing use for overnight management activities and joint management meetings justifies improvements to the camp or an entirely new facility.

The joint management plan must contain a process for considering the expansion of the reserve. No such proposals are foreseen within the term of this plan.

## **Directions**

- 8.1.1** The joint management partners will plan budgets and operations for the reserve as a part of Central District Parks, through annual general meetings. See Direction 3.4 on page 18.
- 8.1.2** External funding will be sought for suitable projects.
- 8.1.3** The Parks and Wildlife Service will continue to support flexible work and training programs for Traditional Owners and their families in cooperation with other organisations.
- 8.1.4** Traditional Owners and Aboriginal organisations they support will be preferred contract service providers for the Parks and Wildlife Service.
- 8.1.5** Amenities at the ranger camp will be improved. A new management facility (ranger base) may be developed if management operations warrant it, subject to normal cultural, environmental and financial considerations.
- 8.1.6** Expansion of the reserve will be considered by the joint management partners if and when such opportunity arises.

## 8.2 Promoting the Reserve

### Our Aim

- Promotion and marketing of Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve, presenting accurate and appropriate information and images.

### Background

The joint management partners want the reserve to have a positive public profile. Media coverage and other forms of promotion can help public support for the reserve with flow-on benefits to the partners and the Northern Territory. Accurate promotion and marketing of the reserve gives visitors appropriate expectations. It also influences visitor numbers, behaviour and satisfaction.

It is important for the joint management partners to have clear guidelines for promotion of the reserve and to work collaboratively with other stakeholders involved in promotion. Information about the reserve and images of *Wurre* are publicised by the Parks and Wildlife Service, Tourism NT and private tourism operators. The reserve is also the subject of commercial filming and photography (see Section 8.3 on page 52).

The reserve has a long history of Aboriginal association. The reserve's main feature had the name *Wurre* long before it became popularly known as Rainbow Valley. Many other features on the reserve have Aboriginal names that Traditional Owners would like to see promoted and brought into regular use.

### Directions

- 8.2.1** The joint management partners will collaborate with governments and private interests involved in the reserve's promotion and ensure that publicised images and messages are accurate, appropriate to the reserve's values and vision and consistent with protocols for the use of indigenous cultural and intellectual property. See Direction 3.2
- 8.2.2** Traditional Owners will be informed of marketing and promotional activities relating to the reserve. They will be consulted when there may be conflict with their views and interests. Engagement with the tourism industry will be formalised through a specific consultative group of the joint management partners if the partners agree there is benefit in doing so.
- 8.2.3** The traditional place name *Wurre* will be used in interpretive media and promotional material relating to the reserve.
- 8.2.4** The Tourism NT image gallery will be used as a resource for mainstream promotion of the Reserve.

## 8.3 Commercial Activity, Leases and Licences

### Our Aim

- Commercial use of the reserve serving the interests of the public and the joint management partners, appropriate for the vision of the reserve and compliant with this plan, relevant laws and regulations.

### Background

Commercial activities on Northern Territory Parks and Reserves require a permit under By-Law 13 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-Laws*. These permits state the rules and regulations that permit holders must abide by to ensure their activities have minimal impact on the environment and other park users. As of 2006, tours and filming have been the only commercial activities carried out in the reserve.

The reserve is currently a destination for about 16 tour companies which use the area without special rights or conditions. In April 2006, the Parks and Wildlife Service introduced the Tour Operator Permit System. Tour companies visiting any Northern Territory park or reserve need to have a permit issued under this system.

Tour operators have a strong influence on visitors' experience of the reserve. The joint management partners want information given by tour operators to be well presented, accurate and appropriate. The Tour Operator Permit System makes it possible to monitor operator activities and the impact of tour groups. It also provides a means for the joint management partners to communicate with tour operators that use the reserve.

By-Law 13 also provides for concession operations. These apply to activities involving special access or use of the park. An operational agreement sets out the rights and obligations of the concessionaire. A licence or lease may be issued where a secure form of land tenure for occupation or specific use of an area is required.

No concession permits have been issued for the reserve to date. Joint management agreements provide for preference to be given to local Aboriginal people and businesses in granting licences and leases to operate concessions. There are many opportunities that Traditional Owners may take up, including cultural tours and sales of refreshments and artefacts to visitors.





*We want to develop a respectful and honest relationship with the tourism industry. We will need their help for marketing and promotion.*

The image of *Wurre*, the Rainbow Valley bluff, has often featured in tourism and product advertising and occasionally in feature films. The joint management partners want to promote the reserve to tourists and to the wider community. They know that commercial photography and filming can help this to happen. They want commercial use of images of the reserve to appropriately reflect the values of the reserve and its management. They want to be actively involved in commercial filming and photography.

Practical commercial filming guidelines are necessary. Such guidelines need to recognise Traditional Owners interests and be consistent with the Parks and Wildlife Service Commercial Filming and Photography Policy and related procedures. The policy provides for individual parks and reserves to have supplementary commercial filming and photography policies, guidelines and fee schedules.

## Directions

- 8.3.1** Permits for tour businesses making normal use of the reserve will continue to be issued in accordance with the Tour Operator Permit System. Information acquired from this system will be used for the better management of the reserve.
- 8.3.2** Proposals to establish concession operations on the reserve will be considered by the joint management partners.
- 8.3.3** Traditional Owners will be encouraged and supported to pursue commercial opportunities in relation to the reserve. The Parks and Wildlife Service, CLC and other relevant organisations will work together to facilitate training and business planning with Traditional Owners.
- 8.3.4** The joint management partners will develop a policy for commercial filming and photography consistent with guidelines given at Appendix 3.
- 8.3.5** Traditional Owners will attend commercial filming activities when appropriate and be paid standard fees.



## 8.4 Relations with Community and Neighbours

### Our Aim

- A supportive regional community and productive relations with others who have an interest in the reserve's management.

### Background

The reserve is a public asset and the partners are jointly accountable to the community. Management decisions can affect local livelihoods. The good management of the reserve's values and minimisation of threats is assisted by working with the interests of others. Joint management does not preclude the involvement of others in decision-making.

The Parks and Wildlife Service works closely with both the Central Australian Tourism Industry Association and Tourism NT on matters surrounding the development and promotion of tourism opportunities on parks and reserves.

The wider community and conservation groups such as the Arid Lands Environment Centre have an interest in the protection of biodiversity, particularly programs involving threatened species. From time to time, other government agencies may have reason to access the reserve, seek information or give management advice.

The reserve's immediate neighbours are the Orange Creek Pastoral Lease and the outstations of John Holland Bore North and South on land held by the Pwete Marnte Marnte Aboriginal Corporation. Land management activities — such as control of fire, weeds, stock and feral animals — can be more effective if they extend beyond reserve boundaries. This requires cooperation among neighbours.

### Directions

- 8.4.1** Any community involvement initiatives that assist in achieving this Plan's aims will be actively supported. The joint management partners will keep the community and stakeholders informed about significant issues and proposed developments relating to the reserve.
- 8.4.2** The joint management partners will be proactive in working with the tourism industry through established forums and organisations such as the Central Australian Tourism Industry Association.
- 8.4.3** Managing the reserve will include regular liaison with neighbours and, when appropriate, work together on fire control, stock and feral animal control, weed control, soil conservation and tourism development.



## 8.5 Research, Survey and Monitoring

### Our Aim

- Research, survey and monitoring activities that benefit the reserve and its management.

### Background

Good management decisions need good information about the reserve's values, visitor use, environmental trends and the effectiveness of management actions.

Most research, survey and monitoring programs are carried out as internal projects by the Parks and Wildlife Service. Examples of ongoing internal projects include:

- Systematic sampling of visitor numbers, profile, activities and satisfaction.
- Monitoring the status of the rare shrub *Eremophila Rainbow Valley*.
- Surveying weeds to determine the impact of control efforts.
- Biophysical data sets as a basis for ongoing vegetation monitoring.
- Fauna survey based on vegetation units.

A significant amount of archaeological research has also been carried out on the reserve by external researchers.

External projects are encouraged where resulting knowledge is expected to contribute to improved management and no marked impact on the reserve's values is expected. Permits may need to be issued under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-Laws*.

Traditional Owners may have knowledge of the reserve that can contribute to research outcomes. It is appropriate they are consulted and invited to participate in research, survey and monitoring projects and employed for their participation when possible. Research and survey projects may concern Aboriginal intellectual property over which Traditional Owners must have control.

Section 3 states that joint management success will be measured against achievement of the aims in this plan and the satisfaction of the joint management partners. Selected performance indicators can provide an additional guide to managers in monitoring management performance.



*Good management decisions need good information*

*Researchers need to ask permission first to work on these places so we know who they are and where they come from.*

## **Directions**

- 8.5.1** Monitoring, evaluation and reporting against this plan will include:
- Review of annual operational plans and monitoring joint management partners' satisfaction, as outlined in Section 3.
  - Applying the selected performance indicators given in Appendix 1 ( following page).
  - Annual reports provided to senior management of the Parks and Wildlife Service and Central Land Council.
- 8.5.2** Visitor monitoring activities will continue in the park under the Parks and Wildlife Service's visitor monitoring program.
- 8.5.3** Priority will be given to internal projects that enhance decision-making in relation to management of the reserve's key values.
- 8.5.4** Traditional Owner participation and employment in research, survey and monitoring projects will be maximised. Traditional Aboriginal knowledge will be incorporated into project objectives and outcomes where appropriate.
- 8.5.5** External research proposals will be considered by the joint management partners with approval subject to satisfaction of the following general conditions:
- The activity will not adversely impact on the reserve's natural or cultural values.
  - The project is likely to inform the better management of the reserve.
  - The activity cannot reasonably occur outside the reserve.
  - The proposal addresses Traditional Owner consent and participation in the project and protection of Aboriginal cultural and intellectual property.
- 8.5.6** The Parks and Wildlife Service may refuse project proposals without specific consultation with Traditional Owners where the project would clearly fail to satisfy the general conditions above.
- 8.5.7** Research, survey and monitoring activities by external groups or individuals involving disturbance of natural features or interference or taking of wildlife will continue to require permits issued under relevant by-laws.
- 8.5.8** Reports on external research, survey and monitoring projects will be provided to the Parks and Wildlife Service and the CLC in hard copy and electronic copy, including plain English summaries for Traditional Owners.
- 8.5.9** The CLC will review study reports prior to publication where intellectual property concerns may arise in relation to cultural information.
- 8.5.10** Research, survey and monitoring programs will be described in operational plans and be subject to annual review by the joint management partners.

## 9. Appendices

### Appendix 1. Selected Performance Indicators

These performance indicators are intended to be an extra tool by which the joint management partners can measure the success of management. They are not the only measures of success but are considered to be the most important measures. There is a reasonable expectation they will be achieved, if not year by year then over the longer term of this Plan. When indicators are not achieved, the reasons will be established and steps taken to improve outcomes.

Section of Plan/Aim	Performance Indicators	Means
<b>3. Making joint management work</b>		
partnership with a focus on results.	Management Directions in this plan. (progressing)	plan review.
Satisfied joint management partners.	Partners satisfaction with joint management processes (at least 90%)	Satisfaction monitoring framework outlined at 3.7.
Benefits to Traditional Owners.	Subject to Traditional Owners expressed interests and capacity: New skills acquired by Traditional Owners. (increasing) Number of days employment in relation to the reserve. (increasing) Number of contract opportunities created and taken up. (increasing) Level of income received by Traditional Owners from the reserve. (increasing)	Ongoing record-keeping and annual review.
<b>5. Cultural Heritage</b>		
heritage maintained and managed according to the wishes of the Traditional Owners and Territory and Commonwealth law.	of cultural values. Traditional Owners satisfaction with control, directions and progress of cultural heritage. (high)	program to be developed. Satisfaction monitoring framework.
<b>6. Natural Heritage</b>		
6.1 Landscape Geology and Soils ■ Soil erosion minimised and eroded areas rehabilitated.	Area of active erosion. (low, declining)	Erosion monitoring program.

<p>6.3 Native Vegetation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The natural diversity of plant communities and species protected.</li> <li>■ Knowledge and understanding of the reserve's flora, including cultural uses and values improved.</li> <li>■ The most significant species recorded, monitored and protected.</li> </ul>	<p>The reserve free from major threatening processes.</p> <p>Data added to (biophysical) databases. (increasing)</p> <p>No detectable decline in presence of <i>Eromophila</i> and <i>Atriplex sturtii</i>.</p>	<p>Flora research, survey and monitoring programs.</p> <p>Biophysical data management.</p>
<p>6.4 Native Animals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The park's natural diversity of fauna protected.</li> <li>■ Knowledge of the park's fauna improved.</li> </ul>	<p>The reserve's habitats free from major threatening processes.</p> <p>Data added to databases. (increasing)</p>	<p>Fauna research, survey and monitoring programs.</p>
<p>6.5 Weeds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The impact of weeds on the native plants, animals and natural environment of the reserve minimised.</li> </ul>	<p>Density and cover of Buffel Grass. (low, declining)</p>	<p>Buffel Grass survey and mapping.</p>
<p>6.6 Feral Animals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The impact of feral/introduced animals on the native plants, animals and natural environment of the reserve minimised.</li> </ul>	<p>Number of sightings of feral animals. (low)</p>	<p>Reporting opportunistic and survey sightings.</p>
<p>6.7 Managing Fire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Minimise the damaging impacts of fire on the native plants, animals and natural environment of the reserve.</li> </ul>	<p>Incidents of wildfire and area of reserve burned. (low)</p>	<p>Fire mapping processes.</p>
<p><b>7. Managing for Visitors</b></p>		
<p>safely and with respect to the area's values.</p>	<p>Number of safety related incidents. (low)</p> <p>Number of inappropriate incidents recorded. (low)</p>	<p>surveys.</p> <p>Routine reporting.</p>
<p><b>8. Managing Business</b></p>		
<p>8.2 Promoting the Reserve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Promotion and marketing of Rainbow Valley presenting accurate and appropriate information and images.</li> </ul>	<p>Incidents of inaccurate or inappropriate promotion. (low)</p>	<p>Ongoing recording.</p>

## Appendix 2. Selected Information Sources

- Duguid, A. 2005. *Wetlands in the Northern Territory*. Volume 2: Information Collated for Individual Wetlands. A report to the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage on the inventory and significance of wetlands in the arid NT. Northern Territory Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts. Alice Springs.
- Galt Smith, B. 1997. *Motives for Motives*. Unpublished BA Honours thesis, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of New England, Armidale.
- Gunn, R. G. 1995. *Rainbow Valley rock art recording*. Report to the AAPA and CCNT, Alice Springs.
- Kimber, R. G. 1991. *Rainbow Valley: Aboriginal rock art survey*. Report to the CCNT, Alice Springs.
- White, M. Albrecht, D. Duguid, A., Latz, P. and Hamilton, M. 2000. *Plant species and sites of botanical significance in the southern bioregions of the Northern Territory*. Volume 1; Significant Vascular Plants. A Report to the Australian Heritage Commission from the Arid Lands Environment Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory of Australia.
- White, M. Albrecht, D. Duguid, A., Latz, P. and Hamilton, M. 2000. *Plant species and sites of botanical significance in the southern bioregions of the Northern Territory*. Volume 2; Significant Sites. A Report to the Australian Heritage Commission from the Arid Lands Environment Centre, Alice Springs, Northern Territory of Australia.
- Ross, J. 2003. *Rock art, ritual and relationships: an archaeological analysis of rock art in the central Australian arid zone*. Unpublished PhD thesis, School of Human and Environmental Studies, University of New England, Armidale.
- Smith, M. 1988. The pattern and timing of prehistoric settlement of central Australia. Unpublished PhD thesis, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of New England, Armidale.
- Smith, M.A. 1988. *The pattern and timing of prehistoric settlement in central Australia*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of new England. Pp.236-243.
- Strehlow, T.G.H. 1971. *Songs of central Australia*. Angus & Robertson, Sydney. (entries under 'wora').
- Paterson, A. 2005. 'Hunter-gatherer interactions with sheep and cattle pastoralists from the Australian arid zone.' In P. Veth and M. Smith (eds.) *Desert peoples*. Pp. 276-292. Malden, MA: Blackwell
- Strehlow, T.G.H. 1969 *Journey to Horseshoe bend*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson
- Wood, R. 1986. *Hugh River stock reserve land claim*. Alice Springs: Central Land Council

## **Appendix 3. Commercial Filming and Photography Guidelines**

### **General permit conditions:**

- The NT image gallery will be promoted as a resource to manage mainstream requests for images from the tourism industry.
- The rocky bluff of Rainbow Valley should not be climbed or accessed.
- Images of certain areas must not be captured for cultural reasons.
- Limited access onto the claypan may be permitted on foot only, if the claypan is dry, under the supervision of a ranger or Traditional Owner.
- Vehicles will not be permitted on the claypan.
- Permit applications must state the intended use of the images to be taken and images may only be used for the purposes stated on the permit, if granted.
- At least ten working days will be required for consideration of filming applications.
- The ranger in charge must be notified at least five working days prior to filming, after a permit has been granted.
- Capture of images of the reserve for news and current affairs reporting will not require a commercial filming permit.

### **Permit approval process:**

- The Parks and Wildlife Service will inform CLC of every permit application.
- The Parks and Wildlife Service may issue filming permits without consulting Traditional Owners where proposed activities comply with the general conditions above and where the intended use of the images is appropriate, low-key and in keeping with Traditional Owners' wishes.
- The Parks and Wildlife Service may refuse filming permits without consulting Traditional Owners where the proposal would have significant impact on the reserve's natural or cultural values or where the proposed use of the images would be against the wishes of the Traditional Owners.
- Permit applications will be considered by the Traditional Owner committee, and if necessary, by the full Traditional Owner group when:
  - Proposed filming involves special access or activities.
  - Proposals may be in conflict with the wishes of Traditional Owners.
  - The expected audience for the product is very large.
  - The proposal is a part of a major commercial project (e.g. a feature film).



## Appendix 4. Indigenous Land Use Agreement

### NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

#### Rainbow Valley

#### Framework for the Future Indigenous Land Use Agreement

IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBDIVISION C OF DIVISION 3 OF PART 2 OF THE *NATIVE TITLE ACT*, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEALING WITH FUTURE DEVELOPMENT, COMPENSATION AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS IN RESPECT OF A PARK IDENTIFIED IN SCHEDULE 3 OF THE *PARKS AND RESERVES (FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE) ACT*

THIS AGREEMENT is made the 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 2015

#### BETWEEN:

the **NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA** care of the Department of the Chief Minister, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, N T House, 22 Mitchell Street, Darwin NT 0800 ("the Territory")

#### AND:

the **CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL**, a body corporate established pursuant to section 21 of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Commonwealth) of 33 Stuart Highway, Alice Springs 0870 Northern Territory ("the Land Council")

#### RECITALS

- A. Following the decision of the High Court in *Ward*, the Territory and the Northern and Central Land Councils entered into negotiations concerning the future title and management of a number of Parks and Reserves in the Northern Territory. The Territory and the Land Councils considered that a negotiated outcome was preferred, so as to avoid expensive and drawn-out litigation that would occur over many years.
- B. Following those negotiations, the Territory enacted the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act* ("the Act"). The Act provides that, inter alia, the Chief Minister is authorised to execute a Joint Management Agreement over the Parks and Reserves specified in Schedule 3 of the Act.
- C. Section 10 of the Act provides that the Chief Minister is only authorised to execute a Joint Management Agreement over the Parks and Reserves specified in Schedule 3 if, inter alia, one or more Indigenous Land Use Agreements or other legally enforceable agreements have been executed dealing with compensation for the effect of the declaration or purported declaration and use of those parks and reserves on native title rights and interests, and facilitating future development in those Parks and Reserves.
- D. The area of land described in the Schedule ("the Park") is one of the Parks specified in Schedule 3 of the Act. The purpose of this agreement is to satisfy the condition set out in section 10(1)(b) of the Act, and to otherwise deal with native title issues in respect of the execution of the Joint Management Deed and actions taken in accordance with the Plan of Management for the Park.

- E. The parties have agreed to enter into this agreement to confirm that the provisions of the Act applicable to the Park have been complied with.

**NOW THIS AGREEMENT WITNESSES** as follows:

**1. Interpretation**

- 1.1 In this agreement, including the Recitals, unless the context otherwise requires:

"approved determination of native title" has the same meaning as it has in the *Native Title Act*;

"future act" has the same meaning as it has in the *Native Title Act*, and "future acts" has a corresponding meaning;

"Joint Management Agreement" has the same meaning as in the Act;

"Joint Management Partners" has the same meaning as in the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*;

"Joint Management Plan" means the Joint Management Plan for the Park as agreed by the Joint Management Partners and created in accordance with the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*;

"Joint Management Principles" means the principles for joint management of the Park at Attachment 'A'.

"*Native Title Act*" means the *Native Title Act* 1993 (Commonwealth);

"Native Title Regulations" means the Native Title "Indigenous Land Use Agreements" Regulation 1999;

"Register" means the Register of Indigenous Land Use Agreements established pursuant to Part 8A of the *Native Title Act*;

"Registrar" means the Native Title Registrar under the *Native Title Act*;

"the Act" means the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*;

"the Park" means the area of land described in Item 2 of the Schedule;

- 1.2 In this agreement, unless the contrary intention appears:

(a) "person" includes a firm, body corporate, statutory corporation, an unincorporated association or an authority and a reference to gender includes each other gender;

(b) the singular includes the plural and visa versa;

(c) a reference to a person includes a reference to the person's executors, administrators, successors, substitutes (including but not limited to persons taking by novation) and assigns;

- (d) an agreement, representation or warranty on the part of or in favour of two or more persons binds or is for the benefit of them jointly and severally; and
- (e) a reference to anything is a reference to the whole or any part of it and reference to a group of persons is a reference to any one or more of them.

## 2. **Term and Conditions Precedent**

- 2.1 This agreement shall be for a term of ninety-nine (99) years from the date of registration in accordance with the *Native Title Act*, and the parties agree to negotiate in good faith for the renewal or extension of this agreement not later than five (5) years before it expires, at the option of the Territory.
- 2.2 This agreement shall have no force or effect and shall not be binding on any party unless and until the Chief Minister has indicated that she is satisfied that the conditions set out in section 10 of the Act have been satisfied.

## 3. **Consent, Compensation and Use of Park**

- 3.1 The parties consent to:
  - (a) the execution by the Land Council and the Territory of the Joint Management Agreement in respect of the Park;
  - (b) management of the Park in accordance with the Joint Management Principles;
  - (c) any action taken whilst this agreement is in force that is in accordance with, or permitted by the Joint Management Principles or Joint Management Plan (including, without limitation, the grant of sub-leases for commercial purposes and the construction, operation and maintenance of improvements in the Park),

whether or not they are future acts.

- 3.2 The parties acknowledge and agree that Subdivision P of Division 3 of Part 2 of the *Native Title Act* does not and is not intended to apply to the actions specified in clause 3.1.
- 3.3 The parties agree that the non-extinguishment principle set out in section 238 of the *Native Title Act* applies to and in relation to all of the actions set out in clause 3.1.
- 3.4 The Land Council and the Native Title Parties agree that while this agreement in respect of the Park is in force, they will not make or

pursue any application for native title determination in respect of the Park or any part of the Park except for the purposes only of :

- (a) addressing an application for the creation of a right to mine as defined in the *Native Title Act* (and then only to the extent of the proposed grant);
- (b) responding to a notice of proposed compulsory acquisition (and then only to the extent of the proposed acquisition);
- (c) responding to a non-claimant application as defined in the *Native Title Act*;
- (d) the setting up or operations of a registered native title body corporate following an approved determination of native title; or
- (e) an application under section 13 of the *Native Title Act* to vary an approved determination of native title.

3.5 Notwithstanding clause 3.4 above, the parties agree that the Land Council and/or the Native Title Parties may make or pursue an application for native title determination in respect of the Park or any part of the Park with the written consent of the Territory. The Territory shall not unreasonably refuse to give consent where:

- (a) the Territory has been provided with reasonably detailed anthropological material and other evidence that the Territory may reasonably require in order to form a view on the strength of the application for native title determination and the likelihood of success of a request to the Federal Court for a consent determination;
- (b) the Territory is reasonably of the view that a request for consent determination will be accepted by the Federal Court; and
- (c) the parties acting reasonably have agreed or agreed in principle upon the proposed terms for a consent determination,

however in any other circumstances the Territory may refuse to give consent in its absolute discretion.

3.6 The parties agree that in the event that any compensation is payable, pursuant to the *Native Title Act* or otherwise, in respect of the effect on native title rights and interests:

- (a) of any action the subject of the consent given in clause 3.1 above; or



however in any other circumstances the Territory may refuse to give consent in its absolute discretion.

3.6 The parties agree that in the event that any compensation is payable, pursuant to the *Native Title Act* or otherwise, in respect of the effect on native title rights and interests:

- (a) of any action the subject of the consent given in clause 3.1 above; or
- (b) by virtue of any action taken by the Territory or the Commonwealth in respect of the declaration or purported declaration and use or purported use of the Park as a Park declared under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, or any earlier Act or Ordinance of the Territory or the Commonwealth prior to the date of registration of this Indigenous Land Use Agreement,

then the quantum of such compensation is limited to a total of One Dollar (\$1.00).

#### 4. **Joint Management Principles**

4.1 The parties agree that the Park will be managed in accordance with the Joint Management Principles, and agree to comply with their respective obligations as set out in the Joint Management Principles;

4.2 the parties agree that:

- (a) a breach of clause 4.1 by one party that is substantially detrimental to the interests of the other party; or
- (b)
  - (i) the enactment of an Act;
  - (ii) the passing of Regulations or By-Laws;
  - (iii) the coming into operation of a Plan of Management
  - (iv) the making of or entry into an arrangement under section 91 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*, or
  - (v) the delegation of the Territory's powers and functions (whether under section 7 or section 23 of the *Parks and Wildlife Commission Act*),

- 4.4 within thirty (30) days after the service of a notice pursuant to clause 4.3 the parties will meet in Darwin/Alice Springs or such other place as they may agree to seek to agree whether there is a breach and if there is, to seek to agree on a remedy for the breach;
- 4.5 where a meeting referred to in clause 4.4 and any further meetings as are agreed to between the parties does not result in a cure or agreement that there is no breach, or where the party who served the notice in accordance with clause 4.3 is ready, willing and able to meet but there is no meeting, the party who gave the notice in accordance with clause 4.3 may give the other party a termination notice;
- 4.6 upon receipt of a termination notice under clause 4.5 the party receiving the notice will have eighteen (18) months to remedy the breach;
- 4.7 if at the expiry of the notice period referred to in clause 4.6 the breach has not been remedied, the party who issued the termination notice may issue a final termination notice which will take effect upon the expiry of twenty-eight (28) days; and
- 4.8 upon issue of a final termination notice, the parties must meet within twenty-eight (28) days to negotiate in good faith for a further Indigenous Land Use Agreement for the joint management of the Park.

## 5. Warranties

- 5.1 The Land Council warrants to the Territory that:
  - (a) as required by subsection 203BH(2) of the *Native Title Act*, it has, before becoming a party to this agreement, as far as practicable, and having regard to the matters proposed to be covered by this agreement, consulted with and had regard to the interests of persons who hold or who may hold native title in the Park; and
  - (b) as required by subsection 203BE(5) and 203BH(2) of the *Native Title Act*, it is of the opinion that:
    - (i) all reasonable efforts have been made to ensure that all persons who hold or may hold native title in the Park have been identified; and
    - (ii) all of the persons so identified have authorised the making of this agreement.

## 6. Registration

- 6.1 The parties agree that the Land Council shall apply to the Registrar for this agreement to be registered on the Register.



6.2 The parties agree that they shall in all respects cooperate with the Registrar and do all things necessary or convenient in order to satisfy the Registrar, upon the application for registration being made, that this agreement should be registered.

6.3 For the purposes of subsection 24CG(1) of the *Native Title Act*, and paragraph 7(2)(b) of the Native Title Regulations, this agreement constitutes a statement by each party to the agreement that the party agrees to the application for registration being made.

7. **Other**

The Native Title Parties appoint the Land Council to execute the Joint Management Agreement in respect of the Park or any amendments to the Joint Management Agreement.

8. **Miscellaneous**

8.1 **Severability**

If a court determines that a word, phrase, sentence, paragraph or provision in this agreement is unenforceable, illegal or void then it shall be severed and the other provisions of this arrangement shall remain operative.

8.2 **Counterparts**

This Agreement may be signed in any number of counterparts and all such counterparts when taken together shall constitute one instrument.

EXECUTED by the parties as an Agreement.

SIGNED by the HON CLARE MAJELLA )  
MARTIN MLA, CHIEF MINISTER )  
for and on behalf of the NORTHERN )  
TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA )

*Clare Martin*

*[Signature]*  
Witness *TRANS Dowling*

IN WITNESS whereof the COMMON )  
SEAL of the CENTRAL LAND )  
COUNCIL was hereunto affixed in the )  
presence of: )



*William BROWN*  
Chairman

*Benjamin*  
*J. Calma*

## **SCHEDULE**

The Park

### **RAINBOW VALLEY CONSERVATION RESERVE**

All that parcel of land near Rainbow Valley in the Northern Territory of Australia containing an area of 2483 hectares more or less being Northern Territory Portion 1993 more particularly delineated on Survey Plan S83/35 lodged with the Surveyor General, Darwin.

## **Joint Management Principles**

referred to in clause 4.1 of the ILUA

### **1. Objectives**

The objective of this Joint Management Schedule is to provide a framework for certain aspects of the joint management of the Park that is consistent with the agreements of the Joint Management Partners.

### **2. Definitions**

In the Schedule, unless the contrary intention appears:

- (a) a term defined in the lease or ILUA (as appropriate) has the same meaning in this Schedule.
- (b) "Joint Management Agreement" has the same meaning as in the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act*

### **3. Functions of the Parks and Wildlife Service**

The functions of the Parks and Wildlife Service will include:

- (a) represent the Territory in a partnership with traditional Aboriginal owners to jointly manage the Park;
- (b) day to day management;
- (c) facilitating the preparation of Plans of Management, in partnership with the traditional Aboriginal owners; and
- (d) subject to the Joint Management Plan:
  - (i) issuing permits for the operation of concessions in parks, with the consent of relevant traditional Aboriginal owners; and
  - (ii) implementing the Parks Aboriginal Employment and Training Strategy (as described in the Joint Management Agreement).

### **4. Role of Land Councils**

The role of the Land Councils with respect to joint management is to:

- (a) Identify traditional Aboriginal owners for the purposes of developing Joint Management Plans ;

- (b) monitor & support joint management arrangements;
- (c) distribute income; and
- (d) assist traditional landowners to participate in the development of Joint Management Plans.

## 5. Training and Employment

The Lessee agrees (with the cooperation of the relevant traditional Aboriginal owners):

- (a) to implement an Aboriginal training programme the broad objectives of which are agreed with the traditional Aboriginal owners, comprising training in skills relevant to the administration, planning, management and control of parks ("the Aboriginal training programme") ;
- (b) subject to giving preference to relevant Aboriginals, to use their best endeavours to employ in the Park in positions which are appropriate having regard to qualifications acquired in participation in the Aboriginal training program, all persons who complete a course of the program or, where such positions are not available, to assist in finding comparable employment;
- (c) in the Aboriginal training program to offer Ranger training and land management courses up to and including, where appropriate, the levels required for the positions of Senior Ranger or Chief District Ranger or alternatively to provide such training by outside placement;
- (d) to employ training officers wherever necessary, and to give due consideration in the employment of such officers to suitably qualified Aboriginal persons having regard to the objective of the parties to maximize Aboriginal employment;
- (e) to provide appropriate and reasonable resources (including staff, training facilities and accommodation) for Aboriginal trainees;
- (f) in the Aboriginal training programme and in the management of the park to emphasise social and cultural values and land management practices;
- (g) to actively seek to achieve that at the earliest practicable opportunity the majority of permanent employment positions in the Park are held by suitably qualified relevant Aboriginals;
- (h) to such extent as is practicable, to provide for continuing training in the appropriate skills, including literacy and numeracy, for Aboriginal persons employed in permanent positions in the Park ;
- (i) to take all practicable steps to make provision for traditional obligations in determining working hours and conditions;

- (j) subject to giving preference to relevant Aboriginals, to give preference to Aboriginal people, companies and organizations when issuing leases, licences, contracts, or making available casual or temporary employment subject to any law in force in the Northern Territory.

## **6. Commercial and Business Opportunities**

- (a) The Joint Management Partners agree that commercial activity in the Park will be in accordance with the Joint Management Plan; and
- (b) The lessee must give preference to the participation of the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve in any commercial activities conducted under the lease

## **7. Staffing**

- (a) the Lessee shall at all times use its best endeavours to maintain staff within the Park at the level and designations of staff requirements provided for in the Joint Management Plan;
- (b) the Lessee agrees to consult with and have regard to the views of the Regional Joint Management Groups, or such agents or representatives of the traditional Aboriginal owners as may be nominated by the Joint Management Plan concerning the procedures for and the selection and appointment of any permanent staff where the duties and functions of such staff will involve substantial involvement with day to day administration, management or control of the park and in particular shall include a person nominated by the traditional Aboriginal owners on any selection panel appointed in relation to such appointments;
- (c) the Lessee agrees that, notwithstanding clause 5, employment of all persons having day to day responsibility in the administration and management of the Park shall be subject to the approval of the traditional Aboriginal owners in accordance with a process set out in the Joint Management Plan;
- (e) the Lessee agrees to ensure that from time to time (but no later than six (6) months after commencement of duties of any member of the park staff) each member of the Park staff involved in administration, planning, management and control of the park attends a cross-cultural course the broad objectives of which are agreed by the Joint Management Partners. The Lessee agrees to use its best endeavours to arrange for the cross-cultural course to be carried out, to the extent that it is reasonably practicable, by Aboriginals engaged for that purpose.



## **8. Disposal of Park Equipment**

- (a) Subject to any lawful obligation imposed upon the Lessee by a Law of the Northern Territory, if at any time during the term hereof the Lessee decides to dispose of its interest in any property or equipment of the Lessee used in the operation of the park, the Lessee shall give to the Lessor for the benefit of the Lessor, the Land Council or its nominee, any relevant Aboriginal association and any other incorporated body the membership of which is limited to relevant Aboriginals or groups of relevant Aboriginals (in this clause referred to as the "permitted Aboriginal purchaser") the right of first refusal to purchase the property or equipment or any part of it subject to the following terms and conditions;
- (b) the Lessee shall give notice in writing to the Land Council of the Lessee's intention to dispose of any such property or equipment. The notice shall constitute an offer by the Lessee to sell any such property or equipment to a permitted Aboriginal purchaser for the purchase of the Lessee's interest therein, which consideration shall not impose any more onerous obligation or duty upon the permitted Aboriginal purchaser or require the permitted Aboriginal purchaser to pay any greater amount than the Lessee would impose upon or require from a purchaser other than a permitted Aboriginal purchaser;
- (c) within twenty eight (28) days after giving of the notice a permitted Aboriginal purchaser may give notice in writing to the Lessee of acceptance or rejection of the Lessee's offer to sell;
- (d) in the event of the giving of a notice of acceptance there shall be deemed to be a binding contract for sale by the Lessee and purchase by the permitted Aboriginal purchaser of the Lessee's interest in the said property or equipment for the consideration stated in the Lessee's notice;
- (e) the purchase price shall be paid within twenty eight (28) days from the date on which the notice of acceptance is given to the Lessee or within such other period or upon such terms as may be agreed between the parties to the contract for sale; and
- (f) in the event that a notice of acceptance is not given, the Lessee shall then be at liberty to sell the property or equipment by private contract to any other person for an amount not less than that specified in the notice in writing given pursuant to clause 6(a) or by public auction.

## **9. Other Matters**

The Joint Management Partners agree that:

- (a) the Joint Management Partners shall meet from time to time to formulate written policy in respect of environmental evaluation of proposed

developments in the Park. Proposed developments in the Park shall be consistent with any policy formulated under this clause;

- (b) the Joint Management Partners will work together to put in place a process for protection for intellectual and cultural property rights of traditional owners for the protection of sacred sites and for the protection and preservation of places and items of cultural significance;
- (c) the Joint Management Partners shall formulate a policy for education and educational activities within the Park; and
- (d) the Joint Management Partners shall provide each other with access to all information relating to the operation and management of the Park, including research reports sponsored procured or supported by the Territory that are in the possession of the Territory. This clause does not apply to information that would be privileged from production in litigation, would contravene privacy provisions of relevant Territory or Commonwealth laws, would unreasonably invade an individual's privacy, or that is secret or restricted according to Aboriginal tradition.

The Territory agrees:

- (e) to comply with and take all practicable steps to ensure compliance by all persons with all Acts, regulations and laws applicable to the Joint Management Plan;
- (f) to have regard in the performance of its functions in relation to the park, to such priorities in allocating financial and other resources as are provided in the Joint Management Plan or determined from time to time by the Joint Management Partners;
- (g) to promote and protect the interests of relevant Aboriginals as a group;
- (h) to respect and to promote the protection of sacred sites, cultural heritage and other areas and things of significance to relevant Aboriginals, and the enforcement of the provisions of the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act*;
- (i) to encourage the maintenance of the Aboriginal tradition of relevant Aboriginals;
- (j) to take all practicable steps to promote Aboriginal involvement in the administration, management and control of the park;
- (k) subject to the Joint Management Plan, to engage as many relevant Aboriginals as is practicable to provide services in and in relation to the park, including but not limited to the utilisation of the traditional skills of Aboriginal individuals and groups in the management of the park;

- (l) subject to the Joint Management Plan, to encourage and support Aboriginal business and commercial initiatives and enterprise within the park;
- (m) subject to the Joint Management Plan, to permit an officer or officers of the Land Council to enter and move freely in the park for the purpose of performing on behalf of the Land Council the statutory powers or functions of the Land Council;
- (n) to use its best endeavours to promote among visitors to, employees and commercial operators in the park a knowledge and understanding of and respect for the traditions, languages, culture, customs and skills of relevant Aboriginals and to arrange for appropriate instruction in connection with such matters to be given, to the extent it is reasonably practicable, by Aboriginals engaged for the purpose; and
- (o) to consult with and have regard to the views of the Joint Management Partners before exercising any powers over liquor distribution or consumption in the Park.

#### **10. Financial Audit**

The Territory shall on an annual basis, account to the traditional Aboriginal owners for all income, itemised in reasonable detail, received in respect of the Park. The Territory shall ensure that the relevant audit report prepared for the Parks and Wildlife Service separately identifies concession income received in respect of the Park.

#### **11. Commercial Income**

In addition to the rental as determined above, the Territory shall pay to the Land Trust an amount equal to fifty per cent (50%) of income received in respect of the Park, excluding any reasonable administrative charges.

**NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA**

("the Territory")

**AND:**

**CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL**

("the Land Council")

---

**INDIGENOUS LAND USE AGREEMENT**

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBDIVISION C  
OF DIVISION 3 OF PART 2 OF THE  
NATIVE TITLE ACT, FOR THE PURPOSE  
OF DEALING WITH FUTURE  
DEVELOPMENT, COMPENSATION AND  
OTHER RELATED MATTERS IN  
RESPECT OF A PARK IDENTIFIED IN  
SCHEDULE 3 OF THE PARKS AND  
RESERVES ((FRAMEWORK FOR THE  
FUTURE) ACT**

---

Solicitor for the Northern Territory  
45 Mitchell Street  
DARWIN NT 0800

Telephone: (08) 8999 7837

Facsimile: (08) 8999 6316

Ref: COM2002-229 AJS:ASL

Indigenous Land Use Agreement – Parks –  
Schedule 3 – 7 December 2004

## **Appendix 5. Extracts from *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act***

### **part iii – joint management of certain parks and reserves**

#### **Division 3 – Joint management partners, objective and principles**

##### *25AA. Joint management partners*

**(1) The joint management partners for a park or reserve are –**

- (a) the Territory or a body nominated by the Territory as the representative of the Territory; and
- (b) the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve.

**(2) The joint management partners are together responsible for the management of the park or reserve.**

**(3) The joint management partners must perform their functions under this Part in respect of a park or reserve in a manner that –**

- (a) is consistent with any lease referred to in section 8(c) or 10(1)(f) of the *Framework Act* entered into in respect of the park or reserve;
- (b) is consistent with the joint management agreement referred to in section 8(d) of the *Framework Act* entered into in respect of the park or reserve;
- (c) is consistent with any indigenous land use agreement referred to in section 8(e) of the *Framework Act* entered into in respect of the park or reserve;
- (d) achieves the objective stated in section 25AB;
- (e) is in accordance with the principles stated in section 25AC; and
- (f) is in accordance with the joint management plan for the park or reserve.

##### *25AB. Objective of joint management*

The objective of joint management of a park or reserve is to jointly establish an equitable partnership to manage and maintain the park or reserve as part of a comprehensive and representative system of parks and reserves in the Territory and for the following purposes:

- (a) benefiting both the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve and the wider community;
- (b) protecting biological diversity;
- (c) serving visitor and community needs for education and enjoyment.

### *25AC. Principles of joint management*

The objective is to be achieved by managing the park or reserve in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) recognising, valuing and incorporating Aboriginal culture, knowledge and decision making processes;
- (b) utilising the combined land management skills and expertise of both joint management partners;
- (c) recognising and addressing the need for institutional support and capacity building of the joint management partners;
- (d) recognising that community living areas in or in close proximity to parks and reserves are an integral part of the natural and cultural resource management of parks and reserves;
- (e) involving continuing statutory responsibilities and functions of the Minister with respect to parks and reserves;
- (f) managing parks and reserves may include cooperative management agreements for areas of land outside parks and reserves;
- (g) establishing a process for the consideration of applications for mining and petroleum

## **Division 6 – Role of Land Councils**

### *25AN. Application of Division*

This Division applies in relation to the parks and reserves specified in Schedules 2 and 3 to the *Framework Act*.

### **25AO. Functions of Land Councils in relation to parks and reserves**

**(1) Pursuant to section 23(2) of ALRA, the following functions are conferred on a Land Council:**

- (a) to ascertain and express the wishes and the opinion of Aboriginals living in its area as to the management of the parks and reserves in that area and as to appropriate legislation concerning those parks and reserves;
- (b) to protect the interests of the traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aboriginals interested in, those parks and reserves;
- (c) to consult with the traditional Aboriginal owners of, and other Aboriginals interested in, those parks and reserves about the use of those parks and reserves;
- (d) to negotiate with persons desiring to obtain an estate or interest (including a licence) in any of those parks or reserves on behalf of the traditional Aboriginal owners of that park or reserve and any other Aboriginals interested in that park or reserve;
- (e) to supervise, and provide administrative and other assistance to, the Park Land Trusts holding, or established to hold, park freehold title in parks and reserves in its area.



**(2) In carrying out its functions under subsection (1) in relation to a park or reserve in its area, a Land Council must have regard to the interests of, and must consult with, the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve and any other Aboriginals interested in the park or reserve and, in particular, must not take any action (including, but not limited to, the giving or withholding of consent in any matter in connection with the park freehold title held by a Park Land Trust) unless the Land Council is satisfied that –**

- (a) the traditional Aboriginal owners of the park or reserve understand the nature and purpose of the proposed action and, as a group, consent to it; and
- (b) any Aboriginal community or group that may be affected by the proposed action has been consulted and has had adequate opportunity to express its view to the Land Council.

**(3) In this section –**

“area”, in relation to a Land Council, has the same meaning as in ALRA;

“park freehold title” has the same meaning as in the Framework Act;

“Park Land Trust” has the same meaning as in the Framework Act.

## *Terms of Reference – Regional Museums Grant Support Program Panel*

### 1. Overall objective

The Regional Museums Grant Support Program (RMGSP) Panel undertakes assessment of applications for the RMGSP and its recommendations are provided to the Minister for awarding grants to recipients.

### 2. Background

The RMGSP has been administered since 1997 and is available to all community museums and keeping places operating in the Northern Territory.

The RMGSP grants are made available annually to assist eligible organisations to develop projects that will benefit the museum, meet recognised museum standards, be accessible to the public, and are able to be completed within the funding cycle (one year).

### 3. Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the RMGSP Panel are:

- to assess Grant applications against set criteria;
- to ensure Grant amounts recommended for awarding to recipients total the annual grant allocation for the financial year; and
- to make recommendations as to which organisations should receive Grants

### 4. Membership and appointment

The RMGSP Panel is not a statutory body and positions are honorary. The Committee's membership will consist of three (3) members.

The Panel will be nominated by the Department of Tourism and Culture (DTC) and chaired by the Director, Heritage Branch. The Panel members will provide professional knowledge and expertise across the library, archives, museum and heritage sectors.

Membership is a fixed term for three (3) years.

Recommendations of prospective nominees for new Committee members will be forwarded by the DTC to the Minister for consideration.

## 5. Remuneration

There are no Sitting Fees for members of the RMGSP Panel, however travel expenses will be arranged and paid by the DTC.

## 6. Administration

The DTC will provide secretariat support to the Panel.

## 7. Meetings

The RMGSP Panel meets once annually, following the closing of the RMGSP application period and may be called upon to consider other applications out of this period.

Meetings are held with Panel members in Darwin in-person and/or by teleconference.

## 8. Reporting

A record is kept of the meeting date, attendance, summary of assessments undertaken, and actions.

The DTC forwards the final assessment and recommendations endorsed by the Panel to the Minister for approval and awarding of Grants.

The Panel is advised of successful Grant recipients.

# **Screen Territory Advisory Panel Guidelines**

# SCREEN TERRITORY ADVISORY PANEL

## GUIDELINES

*The Screen Territory Advisory Panel acts as an advisory body to Screen Territory and the Department of Tourism and Culture in relation to Government screen grants, to ensure an expert, transparent, accountable and 'arms-length' process for the allocation of Screen Grants funding.*

*The current Panel is appointed by the Minister for Tourism and Culture until 30 June 2020.*

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# Screen Territory Advisory Panel

## INTRODUCTION

The main objective for the Panel in its assessment of applications is to support those proposals which demonstrate the greatest potential to develop the screen industry in the Northern Territory in line with Northern Territory Government policy priorities.

The Panel needs to be confident that what is proposed is capable of being realised and that there are likely to be tangible benefits for the applicant, the Northern Territory screen industry and the broader community.

There will be a minimum of three project funding rounds each year. The Panel will meet to assess applications to these rounds.

The activities of the Panel are guided by the Screen Territory Grants Program Guidelines (including application assessment criteria) and these Guidelines.

The funding available for distribution is from the Northern Territory Government through Screen Territory.

# Screen Territory Advisory Panel

## SCREEN TERRITORY ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERSHIP

The Panel is appointed by the Minister for Tourism and Culture. Given adequate reason a Panel member may be removed from office at any time by the Minister.

The Panel will consist of up to four members inclusive of regional and Indigenous representation and/or professional expertise whenever possible.

Independent external advisers may assist the Panel in circumstances where specialist expertise is desirable to ensure informed decisions. Specialist and external advisors do not have direct input into the Panel's decisions.

## SCREEN TERRITORY SECRETARIAT

Screen Territory provides support to the Panel and undertakes the role of Secretariat during assessment meetings. The Director, Screen Territory will be present at all assessment meetings.

Screen Territory receives all applications, determines eligibility and conducts a process of quality control to ensure that all the necessary information and support material has been provided.

Screen Territory collates all applications by category, and where possible copies of support materials, and distributes them to Panel members prior to the assessment meeting.

The Director, Screen Territory determines the budget allocation for each funding category in each round of funding in accordance with the budget for the Screen Territory Grants Program.

## FUNDING CATEGORIES

The Screen Territory Grants Program categories are:

- Story Development
- Production Finance
- Industry and Audience Development
- Attachments, Internships and Mentorships
- Travel

The Panel considers and makes recommendations on applications for Project Development, Production Finance, and Industry and Audience Development. Recommendations in relation to applications for Attachments, Internships and Mentorships, and Travel, are made internally to Screen Territory, or a Screen Territory Advisory Panel member.

# Screen Territory Advisory Panel

For further information on the eligibility, categories and criteria see the current Screen Territory Grants Program Guidelines.

## ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Assessment criteria for each funding category are set out in the Screen Territory Grants Program Guidelines which are revised each financial year.

- **External Assessors**

If involved, up to two external assessors will provide written reports in relation to applications for funding.

- **Application Assessment/Ratings**

Panel members should consider the priority they would give to the application. Each member, in their preliminary assessments, considers the applications and rates each application against each assessment criteria using the assessment ratings scale below:

<b>0 – 10</b>	<b>Grading</b>	<b>Justification</b>
9 – 10	Superior	The assessment criterion is met to a very high standard and claims are fully substantiated. Relevant and concrete evidence or examples are provided.
7 – 8	Good	The assessment criterion is met to a high standard. Claims are well substantiated.
5 – 6	Acceptable	The assessment criterion is met to a consistent and acceptable standard with no major shortcomings. Claims are adequately substantiated.
3 – 4	Marginal	The assessment criterion is not fully met. Some claims are unsubstantiated and some strategies appear inadequate.
1 – 2	Poor	The assessment criterion is inadequately addressed. Most claims are unsubstantiated and a number of strategies appear unworkable.
0	Non-compliant	The assessment criterion is not met. Proposals are unworkable.

Ratings are recorded on the templates provided by the Screen Territory Secretariat. If you have a conflict of interest with an application, you must advise Secretariat.

Once the rating sheet is completed, it should be returned to the Screen Territory Secretariat prior to the commencement of the meeting.

All ratings will be compiled identifying each member's rating and the total score for each application.

# Screen Territory Advisory Panel

Panel members should also prepare themselves to discuss each application to form a collective decision in recommending grant support and to what level.

The Panel determines the final ratings and at what minimum rating level, applications will receive funding. The Panel is also required to ensure that an appropriate level of funding is awarded in order for the activity to occur and in accordance with the budget available for the current round.

## ASSESSMENT MEETING PROCEDURES

Assessment meetings are held in accordance with a meeting agenda, set by the Secretariat. It is not required that the Panel follow strict meeting procedures (where motions are formally proposed and seconded), however the Panel may choose to adopt such procedures if it so decides.

### • **Role of Screen Territory Secretariat**

The Screen Territory Secretariat is present at all assessment meetings.

The role of the Secretariat is to:

- set the meeting agenda;
- preserve order and give all present a reasonable opportunity to express their views;
- ensure all applications are treated fairly and with due consideration by the Panel;
- ensure all information pertaining to each application (including the support material) is readily accessible in the appropriate format;
- answer questions and provide further information where required/requested;
- clarify any issues to do with Government funding guidelines, policies and priorities and, if appropriate, remind the Panel should they appear to be being overlooked; and
- record the decisions of the Panel and report (in association with the Chair) on any issues arising from the decision-making process.

The Secretariat does not have a role in debating the particular merits of applications, nor can they vote on applications.

### • **Application Ratings/Discussion**

It is important for Panel members to voice their own opinions and to listen to the opinions of others. It is also important to defend or argue against an application if you feel the discussion is not adequately taking into account all of the issues/knowledge available, however, a formal consensus is required for a final decision to be made.

Prior to the meeting, applications will be ranked in accordance with the collective ratings. Applications which do not meet the minimum overall rating level required to

# Screen Territory Advisory Panel

receive funding, will not be discussed at length and feedback will be noted by the Secretariat. Discussion will only occur where a Panel member has additional information or significant concern that an application will not receive funding.

Applications above the minimum overall rating level required to receive funding will be discussed according to their ratings and Panel members will have the opportunity to amend their ratings if necessary. The Secretariat will continue to update the ratings as changes are required.

A formal consensus on the reasons for funding or not funding an application will be reached and recorded at the meeting. This decision will be consistent with the assessment criteria ratings to allow for detailed and specific feedback to be provided to the applicant. This feedback also forms the basis for individual advice to applicants to strengthen or further develop their application, and for future applications. Applicants are able to obtain verbal feedback on their application.

Any special conditions in relation to the grant required by the Panel also need to be clearly identified and recorded.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Panel members will be required to abstain from discussion and voting and be absent from the meeting room when any discussion or voting is taking place where there is a conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest occurs when a Panel member's decision-making is influenced by a private interest. It is important to avoid, as far as possible, any potential conflict of interest.

Although it is impossible to list every circumstance giving rise to a possible conflict of interest, the following will serve as a guide to the occurrences that might cause conflicts of interest and that should be reported to the Panel. Full disclosure of any situation in doubt should be made to permit an impartial and objective determination.

A Panel member could have a conflict of interest if:

- they or a member of their immediate family have applied for a Grant;
- they or a member of their immediate family are employed by an organisation/individual applying for a Grant;
- they or a member of their immediate family belongs to the board/committee of an organisation applying for a Grant; or
- they have previously discussed the details of an application or have been involved in the preparation of an application.

For the purposes of these guidelines, the definition of "immediate family" in relation to a Panel member means the spouse, parent, brother, sister or child, and includes the child or parent of the Panel member's spouse or de facto spouse.

# Screen Territory Advisory Panel

Panel members are required to declare potential conflicts. Other Panel members also have responsibility for declaring a Panel member to be in a position of potential conflict.

Panel members will be required to abstain from discussion on their own applications or applications relating to an organisation with which they are associated.

Panel members will be expected to take an active interest in screen industry activity throughout the Territory, but cannot receive direct approaches with regard to applications for Screen Territory Grants. Such approaches would need to be declared as a conflict of interest.

A Panel member shall not purport to represent the Panel in any outside activity unless agreed, in writing, by Screen Territory.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Members of the Panel **MUST NOT** disclose the deliberations of the Panel and all discussion during the course of a formal Panel meeting is to be treated as confidential.

Panel members will be required to sign a declaration with regard to confidentiality and conflict of interest prior to each meeting.

## REMUNERATION FOR PANEL MEMBERS

Members of the Screen Territory Advisory Panel are entitled to remuneration and expenses in accordance with the Northern Territory of Australia *Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act* (the Act).

Remuneration and expenses will be arranged by the Secretariat, for attendance at meetings as follows:

- Sitting Fees will be paid in accordance with the attached extracts of the Act.
- Reading time will be paid for each meeting in accordance with the Act. The amount of reading time will be determined by Screen Territory, based on the number of applications received.
- Meals and Incidentals Allowance – for representatives attending meetings away from their usual place of residence will be paid in accordance with Determination 1, issued by the Commissioner of Public Employment each year.
- Travel and Accommodation for representatives attending meetings away from their usual place of residence will be booked and paid for by the Secretariat.

Sitting Fees are taxable. Tax will be withheld from gross payments. Panel members will be required to complete a Tax File Number declaration and bank account details form for payments.





# TJORITJA / WEST MACDONNELL NATIONAL PARK

## JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN

MARCH 2018

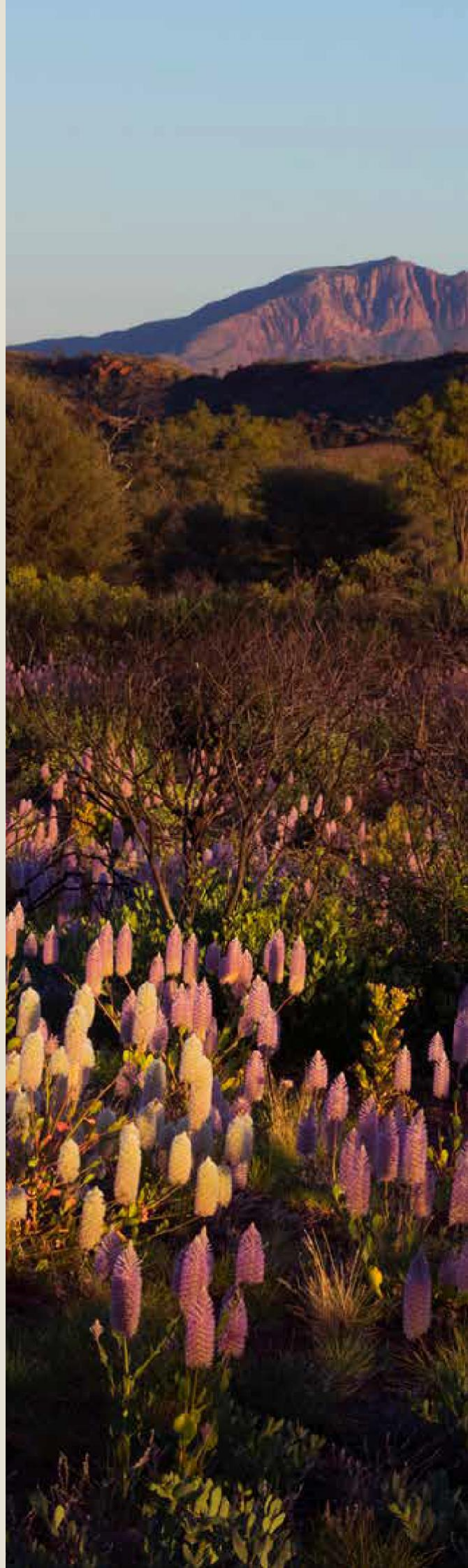


# WORKING TOGETHER TO LOOK AFTER CULTURE AND COUNTRY

*“All countries, peoples and dreamings stay strong,  
respected, healthy and connected.”*

The Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory (PWCNT) present the Joint Management Plan for Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park. As Joint Management Partners, we have developed this Plan with support, assistance and advice from the Central Land Council and other stakeholders including tourism industry representatives. The Plan defines our shared vision, objectives and strategies to deliver effective joint management, care for culture and country and support exciting, memorable and safe visitor experiences.

*Spoken by the Traditional Owners throughout  
this document*







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Cover: Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*“Old people are very special, they show us the way”*

Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park is a majestic landscape featuring ancient mountain ranges, gorges and chasms, permanent waterholes, unique plants and animals and incredible mountain scapes. The Park is one of Australia’s premier national parks, covering over 2000km<sup>2</sup> stretching westwards from the township of Alice Springs for 160kms.

Visitors enjoy Tjoritja in many ways, from walking through towering gorge walls, swimming in waterholes, sighting Black-footed rock wallabies as they graze, being mesmerised by the colours of ancient ochre mines, to camping under a blanket of stars. Tjoritja also has a network of walking trails and bike paths where adventurers can spend days connecting with this amazing landscape.

As Joint Management Partners the Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Commission are responsible for managing Tjoritja together. They care for the country by respectfully sharing cultural and scientific knowledge – recognising the importance of ‘both ways’. The Partners want people to enjoy and learn about the Park as they work towards the goals of effective management, protecting the Park’s natural and cultural assets and creating inspiring, memorable and safe visitor experiences. Central to achieving these goals is supporting the economic development and social wellbeing of local Aranda people. The priorities for Park Management are:

**1. Making Joint Management work** – As Partners, the Traditional Owners and PWCNT work together. This means practicing respectful communication and good governance, learning new ways and working with stakeholders and the community to achieve the objectives of joint management.

Joint management of the Park provides an opportunity to reconcile the past and share responsibility for the Park’s future care. The Joint Management Committee has the overarching responsibility for implementing this Plan. They will make decisions for the Park, oversee the delivery of outcomes, support training, employment and commercial enterprise development, with support from various agencies.

**2. Culture and country** - The Partners are responsible for looking after the outstanding cultural and natural values of Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park including the places of cultural and historical importance, the flora, fauna and dynamic landscapes. The Park is home to places of cultural importance and significance. Under Aboriginal Law, the Traditional Owners are obligated to care for the Park and pass on their knowledge to successive generations.

Using old and new knowledge, the Partners will keep the country healthy to protect flora and fauna and their habitat. The Park’s Healthy Country Plan / Integrated Conservation Strategy will guide the Partners in caring for the Park’s natural values.

**3. Visitor experiences** - The Partners are committed to providing a range of exciting, authentic and engaging experiences for visitors to enjoy, supporting commercial development and opportunities for Aranda people. They seek to ensure the Park thrives as a key tourist attraction and driver of the region’s economy.

Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park truly embodies the character of Australia’s Red Centre, providing visitors with a range of authentic outback bush experiences. About 170,000 visitors (2016) from around the world visit the Park each year, taking home life-long memories as they explore the area by air, on a bike, on short day walks, or longer more epic walks along the Larapinta Trail. Traditional Owners welcome visitors to connect and learn about their land. They want visitors to have an enjoyable and safe visit, and to share the story of Tjoritja with family and friends.

The Park’s outstanding attractions represent opportunities for high quality commercial enterprises, to further enhance the visitor experience and encourage longer stays in the Park. Tourism also creates opportunities for Traditional Owners to work on country by providing immersive cultural experiences as independent businesses or in partnerships with established tour operators. Together with the tourism industry a Visitor Experience Development Plan will be developed to drive the Park’s sustainable tourism growth.

# VISION, APPROACH AND PURPOSE

## Shared Vision

All countries, peoples and dreamings stay strong, respected, healthy and connected.

## Shared Approach

We recognise, respect and help each other. Together we all share responsibility for Tjoritja's past, its wellbeing today and its future.

## Shared Purpose

We will:

- Work together by sharing, knowledge and learning from each other.
- Protect and preserve the Park's natural and cultural values.
- Welcome visitors to experience the incredible beauty and learn about the ancient living history of Tjoritja, while benefiting the Park, Traditional Owners and the regional economy.

# PARK SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUES

*"We see them children and grandchildren as future leaders, following our grandfathers and mothers' footsteps and moving forward".*

Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park (2568 km<sup>2</sup>) is in the heart of Australia, stretching 160kms west from the edge of Alice Springs (Figure 1). Internationally recognised for its stunning landscapes and as a place of cultural importance, the Park contributes substantially to biodiversity conservation and regional tourism.

**Culture** – Traditional Owners maintain strong ties and obligations to their country, following and teaching cultural and ecological knowledge from the Dreaming to their children and grandchildren. There are many places of cultural importance in the Park. These include archaeological sites and sacred places. The ancient rock carvings found in the Park are impressive evidence of a long history of Aboriginal occupation. Cultural tradition also provides employment opportunities through caring for country programs and tourism.

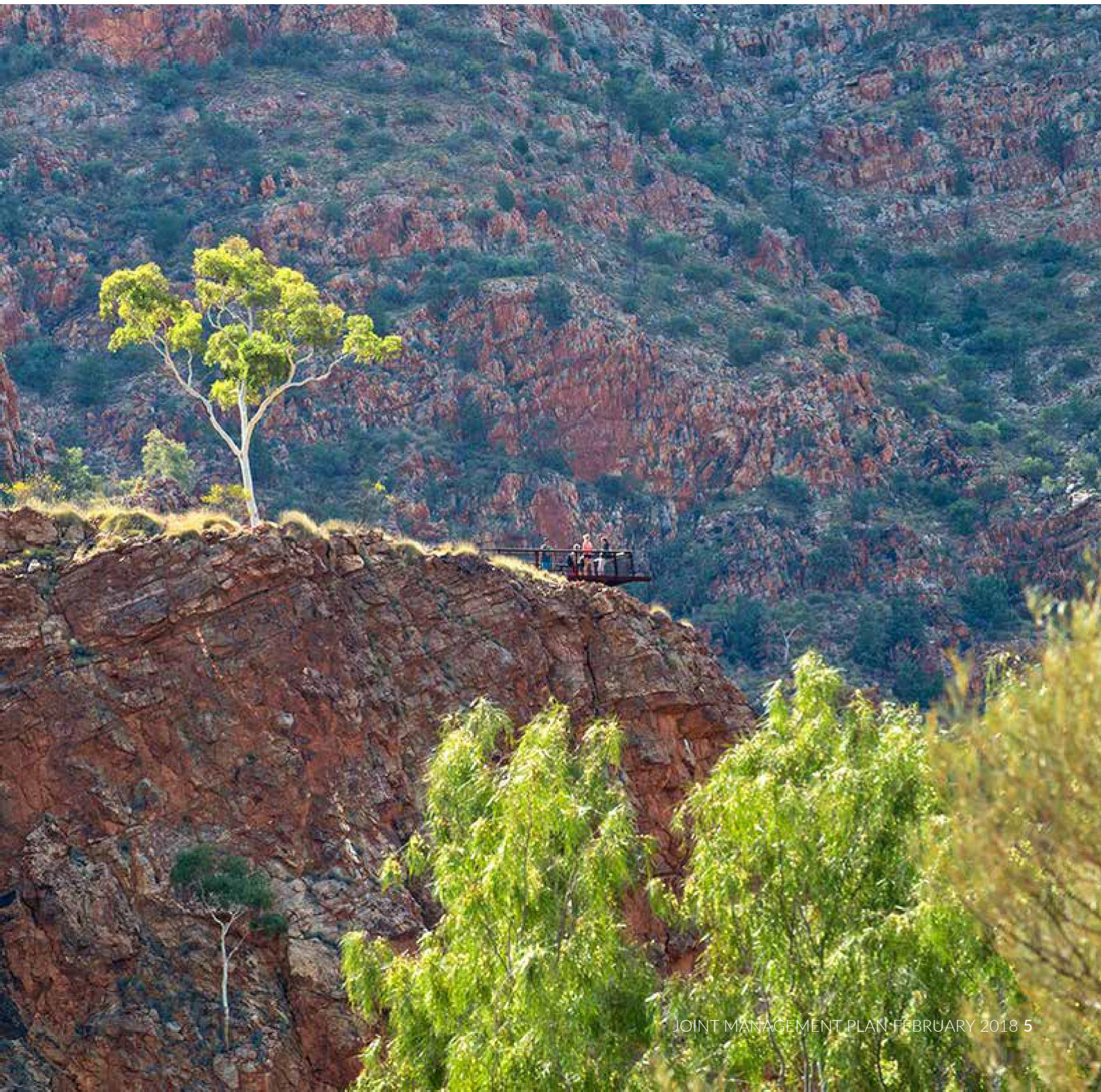
**Country** - The Park lies within the MacDonnell Ranges bioregion; one of 85 bioregions identified nationally. The Greater MacDonnell Ranges are recognised as an international Site of Conservation Significance for their threatened species, endemic species, floral diversity, geological formations and wetland values. Tjoritja is worthy of the best conservation management that can be afforded.

**Tourism** – Tjoritja is one of the premier tourist experiences in Central Australia. It is part of the *Red Centre Way* that links the regional attractions of Watarrka, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Parks and Alice Springs. The Park caters for visitors seeking a wild, rugged and remote experience through to those preferring higher comforts. Tjoritja presents genuine prospects for tourism growth, providing opportunities for both Aboriginal culture-based enterprise and regional economic development. Iconic experiences like the Larapinta Trail have received international acclaim. The Park continues to offer a wide range of nature-based activities centred on the landscape of colourful ranges and gorges, oasis waterholes and sandy, tree-lined riverbeds.



Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park shares common boundaries with several Aboriginal Land Trusts including Ltalaltuma, Rodna, Haasts Bluff, Roulmoulpma and Iwupataka (Jay Creek). The Park also shares boundaries with several pastoral leases, being Bond Springs, Hamilton Downs, Narwietooma and Glen Helen. The eastern boundary adjoins the Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve and the Alice Springs town boundary.

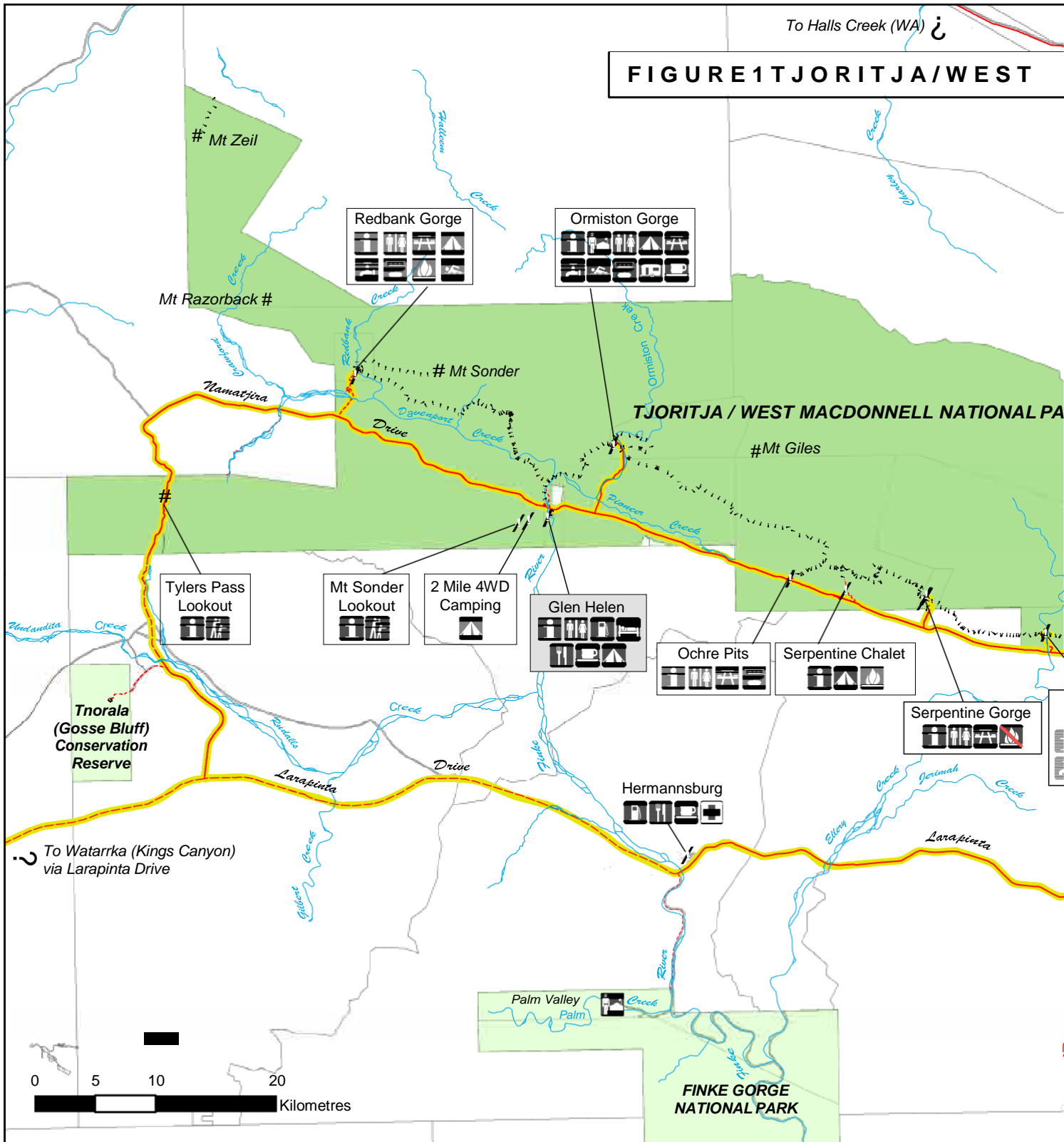
Today, many Traditional Owners have reconnected with their country, either by living and working in close proximity to the Park or on one of the two Aboriginal Living Areas that have been excised from the Park. The Glen Helen Homestead Lodge and Standley Chasm are two commercial operations closely associated with the Park.





To Halls Creek (WA) ?

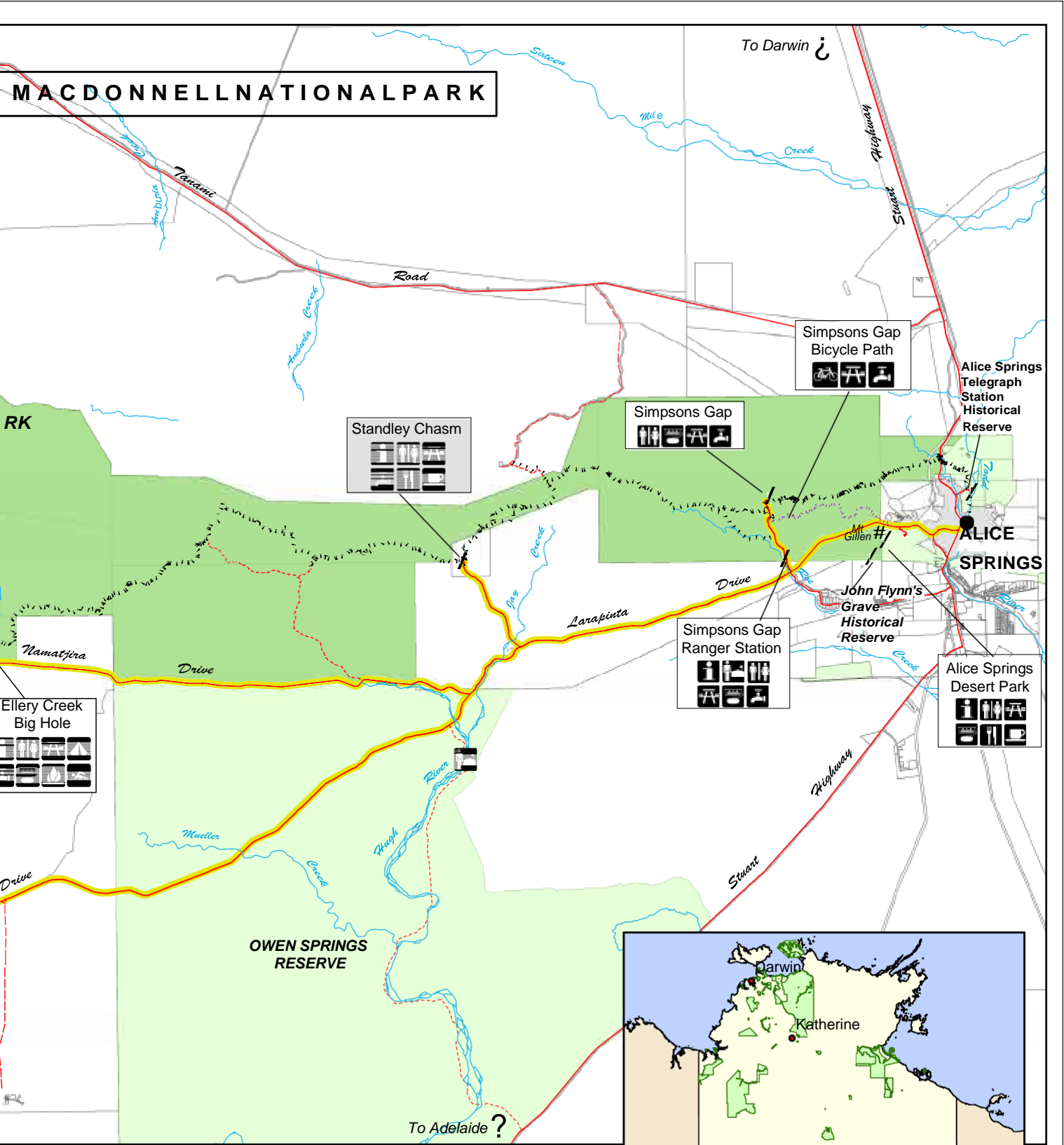
**FIGURE 1 TJORITJA / WEST**



**Legend**

- Larapinta Trail
- Bike Path
- Watercourse
- Tjoritja / West Macdonnell NP
- Cadastre
- Sealed Road
- Unsealed
- 4WD Track
- Red Centre Way

- |  |                   |  |                 |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|--|-----------------|--|-------------------|
|  | Information       |  | No Fires        |  | Meals             |
|  | Ranger Station    |  | Camping         |  | Drinks            |
|  | Parking Areas     |  | Short Walks     |  | Accommodation     |
|  | Toilets           |  | Overnight Walks |  | Caravan sites     |
|  | Picnic Facilities |  | Lookouts        |  | Medical Clinic    |
|  | Drinking Water    |  | Swimming        |  | Fuel              |
|  | Gas BBQs          |  | Bicycle Path    |  | Wheelchair Access |
|  | Wood BBQs         |  |                 |  |                   |



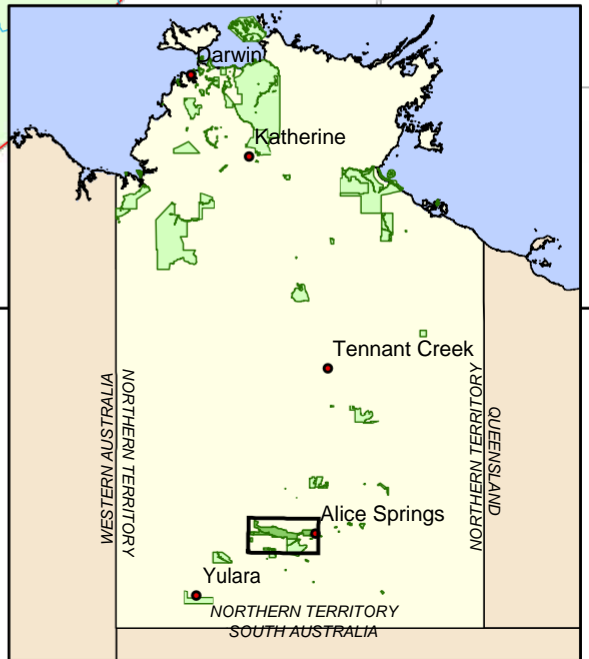
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**DATA SOURCE:**

Cadastral, Topographic, Road Centreline data sourced from Information Services Section, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics

ALOS image product supplied by Geoscience Australia. Image © Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency ("JAXA") 2008



## The Traditional Owners of Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park

To the Traditional Owners of the West MacDonnell National Park, their country is sacred and is of major importance for keeping Aboriginal religion and law strong. Many creation stories and traditions are connected to Tjoritja. To reflect and promote their continuing living connection with the country, in 2014 the Traditional Owners re-named the West MacDonnell National Park to recognise the country's original name, Tjoritja.

Under Aboriginal Law the Traditional Owners of the West MacDonnell National Park belong to sixteen countries or estates.

### **Sharing Our Story**

*In the Creation Time called Tnangkara<sup>2</sup>, our Ancestors created the physical and cultural landscape, inscribing on it our obligations, our beliefs and social order - a charter for life and of the Law. The West MacDonnell National Park covers a large part of country that is called Tjoritja. The Aranda people belonging to Tjoritja sometimes call themselves Tjoritja-rinya, which means 'belonging to Tjoritja'. Tjoritja is a living cultural landscape. The stories of our Ancestors remind us of the importance of our sacred totemic sites. Traditional Owners remain connected to the Ancestors who still live in the most important sites across Tjoritja.*

*While there are many aspects of Aranda traditions that we are happy to share, some stories and religious practices are restricted to men only, and some for women only. This information is referred to as the 'inside story', which means that according to traditional Law and custom it should not be heard by anyone but senior and the appropriate initiated people.*

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<sup>2</sup> called *Tnangkara* in Western Aranda, *Altyerre* in Central Arrernte and *Tjukurrpa* in Luritja.







## History of Joint Management

The Park is situated on Aboriginal freehold land held by the Tyurretye Aboriginal Land Trust as per the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Cwth). In July 2012 grant of title for Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park was given to the Traditional Owners. The Park was then leased to the Northern Territory for 99 years. The terms of joint management have authority in law under the *TPWC Act*, the Park Lease and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (2005) registered under the *Native Title Act*. The name 'Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park' was published in the NT Gazette 15 October 2014. The previous name, West MacDonnell will be removed once the new name is widespread and in common use.







# THEME 1: MAKING JOINT MANAGEMENT WORK

■ *“Working together and supporting each other.”*

Principles for making Joint Management work:

- Good communication is the foundation for a strong partnership.
- Clear roles and responsibilities are essential for joint management to ensure ‘good governance’.
- We acknowledge our differences and benefit from caring for country ‘both ways’.
- Respecting Traditional Owners rights to continue to practice tradition, caring for country and keeping their culture strong.
- Engagement, training and employment of local Aboriginal people is central to joint management success.
- Progress is dependant on competent, well trained Parks staff suitably qualified to undertake responsibilities.
- Decision-making and accountability should be equally shared and Aboriginal decision-making processes must be respected.
- Time spent together on country is vital for developing mutual trust and respect between the Partners and an understanding of the roles each play.
- Resources are limited and must be efficiently used. Management priorities will be guided by the Park’s key values.
- Risks are identified and actions are put in place to minimise them.
- Joint management has to be checked to see that it is working well. It is important to keep improving.
- Public support and engagement is very important for joint management.
- All disputes are well handled through appropriate resolution processes.
- Joint management is an ongoing learning process requiring an adaptive approach.

Joint management is about Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Commission looking after Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park in ways that meet the aspirations of both Partners. If the partnership is working well, outcomes will include equitable and efficient decision-making leading to healthy culture and country, visitors continuing to have safe and enjoyable experiences and the broader community being well informed and involved. Joint management contributes towards economic, social and wellbeing benefits for Traditional Owners and their families, through direct and indirect employment and training opportunities in a diverse range of fields.

The TPWC Act defines the Joint Management Partners as the Traditional Aboriginal Owners of the Park and the Territory. The Act further defines the objective to jointly establish an equitable partnership to manage and maintain the Park as part of a comprehensive and representative system of parks and reserves so that Traditional Owners and the wider community benefits, biodiversity is protected and community needs for education and enjoyment are well served.

The TPWC Act also establishes the requirements of joint management plans and the role of the Central Land Council (CLC) in assisting joint management by representing the interests of the Traditional Owners.

*“Through a good partnership we will build a deeper understanding of the country for rangers, visitors and the young”*

## **Our Roles:**

The **Parks and Wildlife Commission** resource, finance and implement the Park’s ongoing day-to-day management, interpretation, planning and infrastructure programs. Parks and Wildlife Commission officers represent the Northern Territory in the joint management partnership and contribute to setting the management direction.

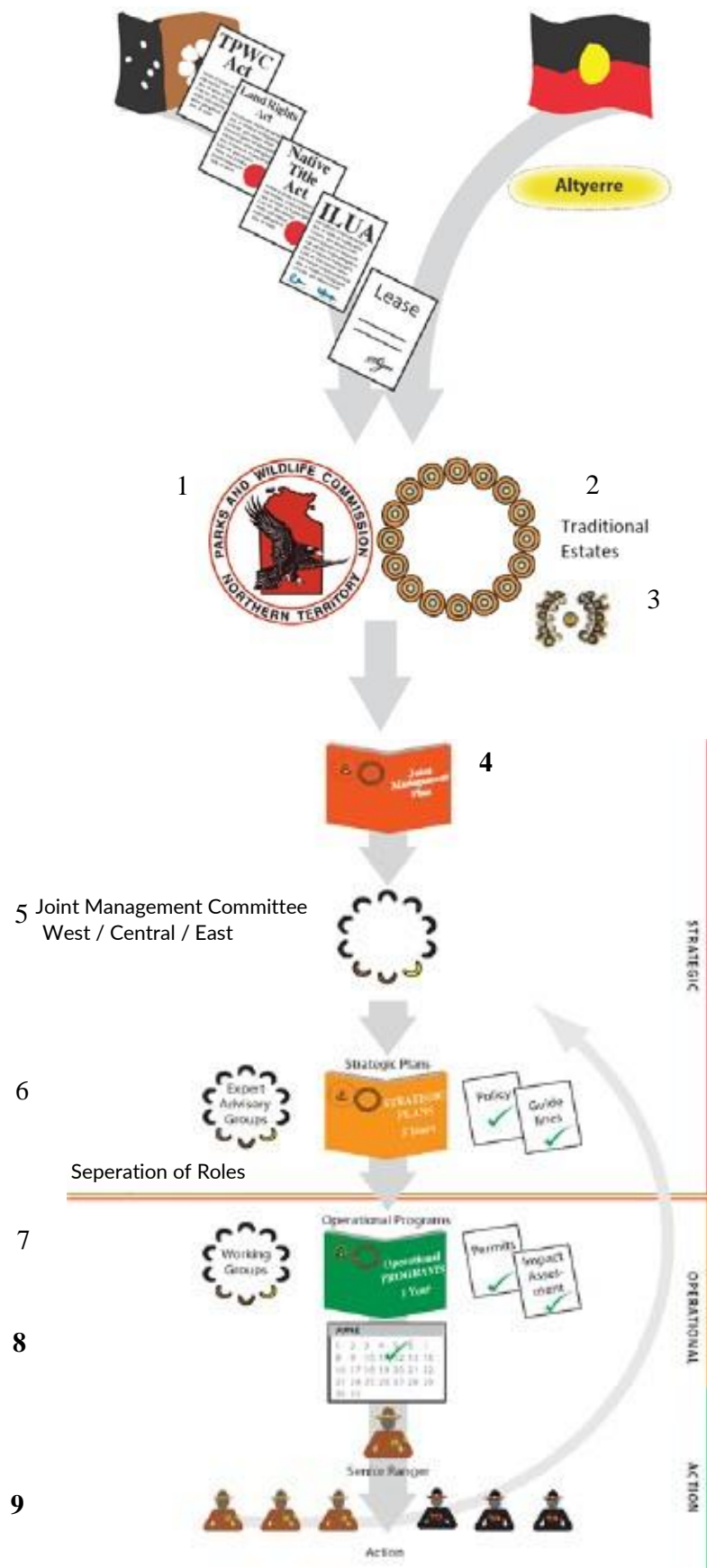
**Traditional Owners** are vital in the direction and management of the Park. Core members of landholding groups have responsibilities for decision-making and overseeing cultural protocol. Traditional Owners are responsible to, and for the land, their Law and culture. They are responsible for managing traditional knowledge and passing it on to the right people, looking after the land and its resources, maintaining sacred sites and keeping the country alive.

The broader community is also interested in the good management of the Park. Successful park management depends on a wide range of individuals and organisations, both private and public, committing to resource and protect the values of the Park. It is important for the Partners to foster positive relationships with the community.

The Partners recognise that joint management is a learning process, requiring an adaptive approach that respects the principles above. A Joint Management Committee (JMC) consists of Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Commission staff. The Partners follow the Decision - Making Structure (see Figure 2), which incorporates principles of traditional decision-making. The Decision - Making Framework (Table 1) provides clear roles of the Partners.



# Decision Making Structure



**Figure 2**

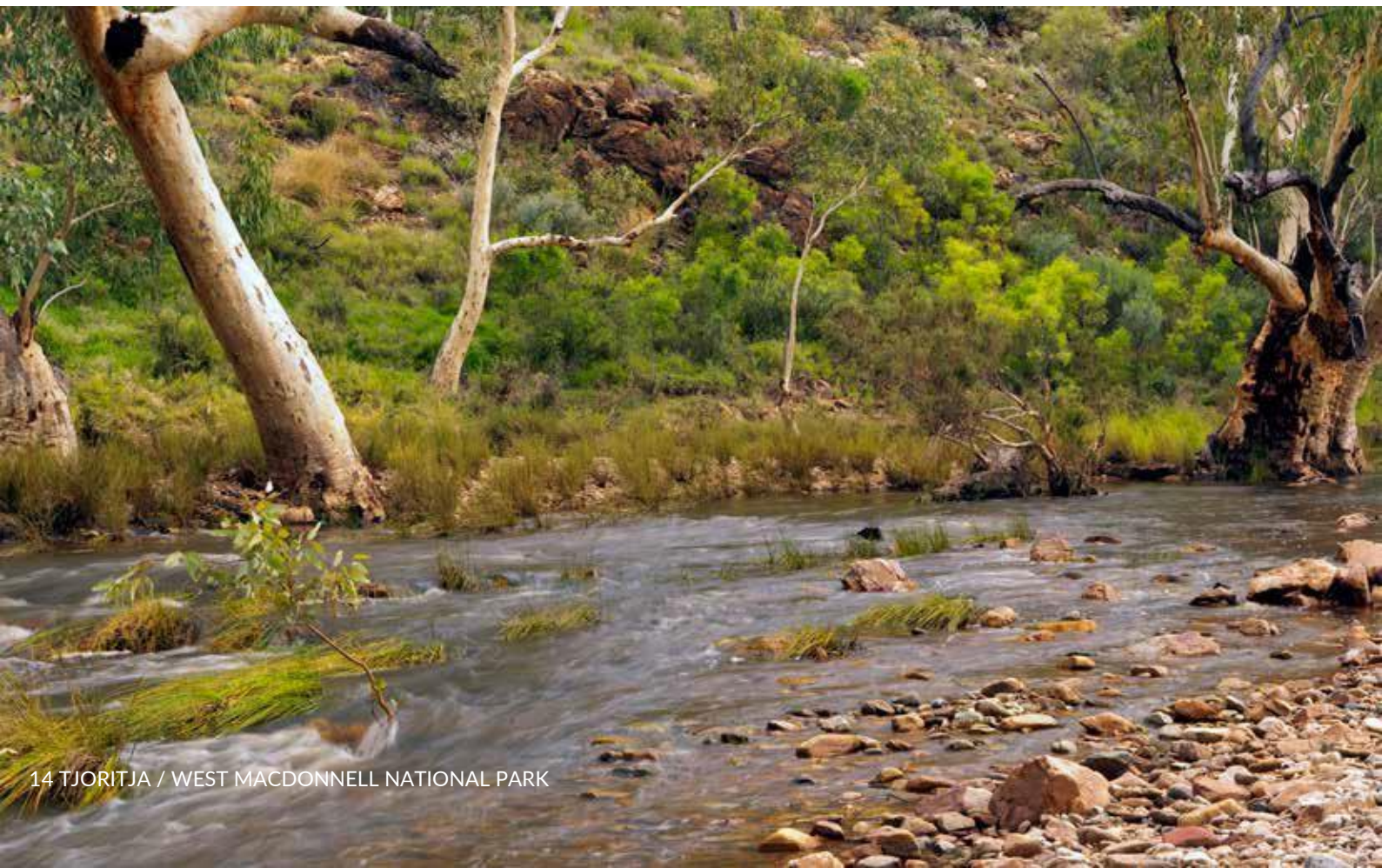
## Shared decision making and planning

- 1 Joint Management Partnership**  
 The TPWCA defines the Partners as the Park's Traditional Aboriginal Owners and the Territory. The Parks and Wildlife Commission represents the Northern Territory.
- 2 Traditional Owners**  
 The full Traditional Owner group will be consulted for large, complex and culturally sensitive proposals or those that cannot be approved by the Joint Management Committee.
- 3 Central Land Council**  
 Central Land Council is responsible for consulting with and protecting the interests of Traditional Owners.
- 4 Joint Management Plan**  
 An agreement between the Joint Management Partners about managing the Park together.
- 5 Joint Management Committee West / Central / East (JMC)**  
 The JMC representative decision making body that will meet to approve local guidelines and criteria to guide decision making and approve Strategic Plans.
- 6 Strategic Plans**  
 Visitor Experience Development Plans, Cultural Heritage Plans, Healthy Country Plan/Integrated Conservation Strategies and other strategies are developed by expert advisory groups which include Traditional Owners, Tourism Industry and other stakeholders.
- 7 Operational Plans**  
 Are developed to acheive outcomes defined by the Partners and may require input from working group/s.
- 8 Parks Operations**  
 Senior Park staff will approve standard permits that require no special access and are consistent with Traditional Owner's wishes.
- 9 Action**  
 Rangers and Traditional Owners carry out agreed management under the Joint Management and Operational Plans.



Table 1: Decision-making Framework

Role of the Joint Management Committee	Role of Park Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold responsibility and accountability as outlined in the Decision-Making Structure.</li> <li>• Take advice from the wider Traditional Owner group and consult with community stakeholders.</li> <li>• Delegate agreed tasks and decisions to advisory or working groups.</li> <li>• Set strategic direction, develop and approve management strategies, including cultural heritage, healthy country/conservation and visitor development.</li> <li>• Approve policy and guidelines that apply to Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park.</li> <li>• Establish direction and decision-making criteria to evaluate permits, contracts, licences, development and unique proposals.</li> <li>• Assess and endorse development proposals, changes to infrastructure and access.</li> <li>• Assess and endorse proposals for new and unique commercial activities, third party interests, licensing, sub-leasing, Park extensions, living areas, and other proposals not specified in this Plan.</li> <li>• Monitor and evaluate management performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake day-to-day park management operations such as patrols, maintenance, visitor services, compliance, community relations and search and rescue.</li> <li>• Implement operational programs in line with approved management strategies including fire, weed and feral animal programs, cultural programs, visitor experience, heritage conservation and community engagement.</li> <li>• Issue permits consistent with legislation, policy, guidelines and decision-making criteria approved by the JMC.</li> <li>• In conjunction with relevant government agencies, issue works contracts, such as those for maintaining, replacing, repairing or improving existing infrastructure and new works.</li> <li>• Maximise on-ground participation of Traditional Owners in management of the Park.</li> <li>• Monitor management effectiveness and adjust management according to new information, improved procedures, new technology and new issues or opportunities.</li> <li>• Report progress to meetings of the Partners.</li> </ul>





## Objective and Strategies

### **Effective governance and a strong and equitable partnership protects Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park's natural and cultural values.**

- The JMC will oversee strategic direction of the Park and follow the decision making structure, adapting and improving governance as required.
  - Meetings on country and dedicated country camps will help Traditional Owners' connection to country, help the Partners understand the land, present issues and share knowledge.
  - The Decision-Making Framework will be the basis of planning and operational Park management.
  - Governance training will be provided to the Partners to give them the tools and skills required to work effectively in the partnership. A monitoring and evaluation program will inform actions to maintain healthy governance.
- Flexible career development, employment and training opportunities will be provided to local Aranda people to participate in on-the-ground park management.
  - Cross-cultural training for staff will be developed and delivered.
  - Proposals for research, expansion of the Park or those not otherwise dealt with in this Plan will be openly considered by the Partners.
  - The JMC will be the means by which this Plan addresses matters under section 25AE (3) of the TPWC Act, unless this Plan states otherwise.





## THEME 2: LOOKING AFTER COUNTRY AND CULTURE

*“Keep the country the same like old time’ ... keep culture strong, keep stories strong.”*

Principles for looking after country and culture:

- The country is alive – health of the country and health of the people are inseparable.
- The country needs looking after to stay healthy; this means working together, growing and using both Aboriginal and scientific knowledge.
- The Park’s ecological, cultural and visitor values are protected by minimising the impacts of wildfire, weeds, erosion and feral animals.
- Management of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and sites is guided by Traditional Owners.
- The Burra Charter (1999) provides sound guidance for cultural heritage conservation.
- Looking after country requires good management and good governance, which is achieved through having the right skills and strong knowledge.
- Protecting special plants, animals and places including sacred sites, heritage places, rock formations, waterholes, springs, plants and animals is paramount.

*“Obligation - not just a word, handed down by elders, through generations, very strong word (obligation). Got an obligation to go look after country. If you don’t then you’re letting the old people down”*

The Joint Management Partners will look after the flora, fauna, landscapes and places of cultural importance using both Aboriginal and scientific knowledge.







**Looking after culture.** The Traditional Owners of the Park are responsible for Tjoritja. Under traditional law they are obligated to protect their land from physical and spiritual harm. This requires people to respect the land and its spirits, the guardians of the land. The landscape may not be interfered with or damaged, as this disturbs the Law and spirits that dwell on, or in the land. Law is reciprocal and looking after country will in turn keep people healthy and culture strong.

**Traditional use.** For Traditional Owners, looking after the country involves visiting and watching it, moving appropriately on it and protecting it from damage. Knowledge is shared about the land and special places, including how to use the country's resources in culturally appropriate ways. Children practice their language, learn the names of places, where to go, how to behave on the country of their Ancestors, continue to learn how to hunt and gather bush foods and are inducted gradually into the songs and rituals of the Law. Under the TPWC Act, Traditional Owners hold the right to hunt wildlife and gather bush foods and medicines including within the Park.

**Aboriginal Heritage Sites.** The rock engravings found across the Park form one of the largest, most complex and significant engraving sites in Central Australia. The Ochre Pits are the only Aboriginal quarry for ochre within Central Australia that is open to visitors. Traditional ochre collection still occurs.

**Shared Heritage Sites.** The remains of pastoralism from the early 1870s and the beginning of the tourism industry are evident in the Park today. Some Historic sites across the Park include:

- The Ormiston Creek homestead, the first built in Central Australia.
- Serpentine Dam and Chalet, remains from the start of the region's tourism industry.
- The wooden stock yards at Giles Yard Springs and Pioneer Creek.
- A lone grave of Jim Cummings buried 1911 near Ellery Creek.
- The sheep yards and stone hut ruins north of Bowmans Gap.
- Timber remains of a well at the junction of Davenport and Redbank Creeks .
- Raggatt's Structure – NT Heritage Registrar 2017.

***“Building relationships and working alongside Aboriginal People, ‘us rangers’ see ourselves as stewards – being there to care and manage all the Park values for the benefit of others” – Ranger***



**Water resources.** The permanent and semi-permanent watercourses, waterholes and groundwater in the Park support a significant percentage of the aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity within the region, including species that are found nowhere else in arid Australia. Permanent water sources in the gorges, were invaluable to Traditional Owners in the past, and continue to retain cultural importance. Several visitor sites concentrate on the gorges and their waterholes and support activities such as swimming, bush walking, camping, nature study and scenic appreciation.

**Plants.** The flora of the Park is species-rich, with the biophysical mapping in 2010 recording about 700 native species within 39 vegetation communities. The MacDonnell Ranges is recognised as one of Australia's top 12 centres of plant species abundance. Several plant species of special conservation status have been recorded and are provided in Appendix 1.

Five localities, either wholly or partly in the Park are recognised for their botanical significance; Mt Zeil, the Chewings Range, Glen Helen, Simpsons Gap and Ilparpa. The most significant vegetation communities are high mountain-peak communities, sheltered freshwater spring and seepage communities and mound spring communities.

**Animals.** The West MacDonnell Ranges support a healthy and varied fauna. The first scientific survey of the area's fauna was undertaken by the Horn

Scientific Expedition of 1894. As of 2017, native fauna of the West MacDonnell Ranges includes:

- Fish: Nine species of native fish are known to occur in the Finke River catchment, and the Park contains all nine of these species.
- Reptiles and Amphibians: about 76 species of reptiles and six species of frogs have been recorded.
- Birds: 152 bird species have been recorded. Major creek systems and tall shrublands support the richest avifauna.
- Mammals: 19 terrestrial mammal species and nine bat species currently occur in the Park. At least 42 native mammals (31 terrestrial and 11 bat species) are known to have once inhabited the West MacDonnell Ranges.
- Invertebrates: Over 30 species of land snails adapted to cope with the arid environment, and various aquatic macroinvertebrates including the water penny (*Sclerocyphon fuscus*).
- The Park protects a significant number of threatened and near-threatened animal species. Over 30% of native mammal species have become extinct in arid Australia within the past 100 years. Nationally significant fauna species occurring in the Park include:
  - Central Rock-rat *Zyzomys pendunculatus* – endangered





- Black-footed rock-wallaby, MacDonnell Ranges race *Petrogale lateralis* – vulnerable
- Princess Parrot *Polytelis alexandrae* - vulnerable
- Desert Sand Skipper *Croitana aestiva* - endangered
- Slater’s Skink *Liopholis slateri* - endangered

The Park is scheduled to be assessed by the Australian Heritage Council for National Heritage listing. The Park may also meet IUCN criteria for World Heritage listing.

**“Fire is important to manage country. We might say ok to burn that area, ‘cause we need fresh grass to grow.”**

**Managing threats.** Large wildfires are the greatest threat to the Park. There have been two major wildfire events in the past 20 years that may have been very damaging to the Park’s wildlife. Today, park staff work together with Traditional Owners, combining traditional and scientific fire management practices. Prescribed burning plays an important role and is used to keep ecosystems healthy, aid traditional hunting and protect the country from damaging hot wildfire, which can occur after big rainfall years due to increased fuel loads.

Buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) is a major threat, mainly through increased fire frequency and intensity from greater fuel loads. The extent of infestation and ecological impact varies throughout the Park. The

highest concentrations occur along watercourses and areas frequented by visitors, feral animals and stock. Couch grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) is also a significant threat that increases fuel loads in most river systems.

Introduced animals include cattle, horses, camels, donkeys, cats, foxes, rabbits and European bees. Cattle, horses and camels cause extensive environmental impacts. They seriously alter and degrade native vegetation, pollute and consume scarce water resources, disturb and erode fragile soils, and introduce weeds. They also detract from visitor impressions of the Park and its management. Cattle, horses and camels enter the Park through breaches in boundary fences which can become damaged after flood events and from adjoining lands where no common boundary fence exists. Conservation management does not stop at the Park boundary. It is imperative that the Park’s neighbours are included in land management programs.

The Park’s Healthy Country Plan / Integrated Conservation Strategy (ICS) describes the most important conservation values and how they will be protected and maintained by managing key threats. Involving Traditional Owners and applying their ecological knowledge is central to this Strategy and its implementation.

Systematic fauna surveys and targeted monitoring is conducted in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. This monitoring aligns with the ICS and provides valuable data to





inform adaptive and effective management programs. Partnerships with research institutions can also add substantial value to our understanding of the landscape and ongoing adaptive management.

In 2008 the Park was reserved from exploration and mining *Under the Minerals Title Act* (NT) and the *Petroleum Act* (NT). Additional protection is provided to the Park being Aboriginal freehold land, Traditional Owners have the right to refuse exploration and mining on their lands. The Traditional Owners feel strongly that mining is not consistent with the scenic, cultural and environmental values of the Park.

## Objective and Strategies

**The Park's natural and cultural values are protected and Aboriginal knowledge and interests are incorporated into management programs.**

- The Partners will learn from each other and share knowledge, using both tradition and science in conservation programs.

- PWCNT will ensure Park staff and Traditional Owners have the capabilities required to implement management programs.
- Respect will be given to the directions and decisions from Traditional Owners on cultural matters. Cultural knowledge shared will always belong to the Traditional Owners and will only be used as directed by them, consistent with Aboriginal Cultural and Intellectual Property Policy.
- The Healthy Country Plan / Integrated Conservation Strategy (ICS) will be reviewed every five years. It will be a public document and include systematic research, monitoring and reporting of the Park's biological resources. As per the ICS, fire management will be given high priority with increased effort to follow high rainfall years when fuel loads increase.



- A Cultural Heritage Management Plan and program for the Park will be developed with advice and support from the CLC. The program will include “back to country” activities and cultural awareness programs for rangers and tourism operators.
- A hunting and gathering policy will be developed by the Partners, supporting traditional land use. The Policy will identify areas for hunting and firearm use, with the underlying goal of keeping country healthy and visitors’ safe.
- Sacred sites will be properly protected, supported by the CLC and Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority as required. The CLC will have primary responsibility for consulting Traditional Owners for proposed works.
- Soil and gravel extraction for soil conservation or other purposes will be subject to the approval of the Partners. Traditional Owner’s right to extract ochre will continue to be upheld under the TPWC Act.
- The Partners will work with the local community and stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach to land management across tenures and neighbouring properties. Cooperative natural resource management will be encouraged with community ranger groups and adjoining landowners.









## THEME 3: VISITOR EXPERIENCES

*“Couldn’t be more impressed! NT Parks do a great job with the facilities for visitors. The National Park really is run with visitors in mind – it is fantastic! Plus, it is stunningly beautiful!”*

*Visitor Feedback – Trip Advisor*

### Principles for Visitor Experiences:

- Delivery and development of rewarding and diverse visitor experiences aligns with the needs of the Territory’s tourism economy.
- Visitors enjoy Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park and leave feeling connected to the Park. This leads to positive promotion and more visitors enjoying the park with benefits for the Park, the regional economy and Traditional Owners.
- The tourism industry must be involved in developing high quality experiences that are responsive to changing visitor interests and expectations.
- Tourism fosters cultural awareness through sharing of traditional practices, encouraging joint ventures, generating income, creating employment for local Aranda people and supporting delivery of the Park’s objectives.
- Understanding visitors and their interests helps grow and enhance tourism.
- Well-designed facilities that are sensitive to the natural and cultural environment contribute to enjoyable, educational and safe visitor experiences.
- Visitor safety is paramount. Traditional Owners welcome visitors and want to ensure they have a safe and memorable experience.

A visit to Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park is an unforgettable experience. The spectacular sunburned mountain vistas contrasts with sandy riverbeds, waterholes and colourful ochre pits and is home to a variety of wildlife. Easily accessible, close to the township of Alice Springs and part of the *Red Centre Way* tourist drive, the Park is an attractive destination to a wide range of visitors. A sense of remoteness and lack of human disturbance are highly valued in today’s fast paced world by domestic and international visitors alike. Visitors can sit back and enjoy a cappuccino and wifi at key visitor nodes in the Park. Growth in visitor numbers creates exciting opportunities for the regional tourism economy.

Through future visitor experience planning with the tourism industry, the Partners aim to enhance existing experiences, improve access and infrastructure, create new activities and grow the Park's domestic and international profile to attract more visitors.

### **Why do visitors come to Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park?**

The West MacDonnell Ranges have been magnificently captured in photography and art, the area made famous by the renowned Aranda watercolour artist, Albert Namatjira. The grandeur of Mount Sonder, Mount Giles, and Mount Razorback greet travellers as they pass, inviting them to explore. Visitor activities include camping, swimming, mountain biking, bushwalking, four wheel driving and bush camping. There are areas popular for rock climbing and abseiling, and sites close to Alice Springs provide birdwatching, photography, cycling, jogging and picnicing. Future opportunities to enrich visitor experiences include face-to-face cultural tourism activities and digital interpretation.

**Sightseeing and picnicking** are possibly the most popular activities. Driving through the Park is a wonderful journey for many visitors. Several visually outstanding parts of the range are accessible along the roads and on walking tracks throughout the Park. Most visitors to the Park take day trips from Alice Springs, visiting Simpsons Gap, Serpentine Gorge, the Ochre Pits, Ellery Creek Big Hole, Ormiston Gorge, Glen Helen and Redbank Gorge.

**Bushwalking** is a very popular activity. During the cooler months (May – September) almost 90 percent of all visitors take a walk. Walks range from long and challenging multi-day hikes to short and easy walks designed for wheel-chair access.

The Larapinta Trail extends over 230 km (see the Larapinta Trail). Beyond the walking trails, adventurous, self-reliant bushwalkers and small commercial bushwalking groups explore remote areas beyond the walking trails.

**Camping** in the Park is a highlight with a range of camping experiences on offer. Bush camping is by four-wheel drive access and is available at Finke Two-Mile, along the Hugh River and at Serpentine Chalet Bush camp. Basic camping facilities are provided at Serpentine Chalet and more developed camping and visitor facilities that are two-wheel drive accessible are provided at Ellery Creek Big Hole, Redbank Gorge and Ormiston Gorge.

Commercial camping is available outside the Park at Glen Helen Homestead Lodge, Standley Chasm, Hamilton Downs Youth Camp, Hermannsburg and Alice Springs.

Additional camping and accommodation options will be encouraged, either within or near the Park.

**Cycling and mountain biking** opportunities have been developed at the eastern end of the Park close to Alice Springs. The Simpsons Gap Bicycle Path meanders for 17 kilometres through woodland covered flats and low hills from Flynn's Grave (on Larapinta Drive) to Simpsons Gap.

The 21 kilometre West MacDonnell Mountain Bike Trail will be part of the Alice Springs trail network, linking with the Alice Springs Telegraph Station and the Alice Springs Desert Park. Mountain bike riding is growing in popularity and the Park's trail has been used for mountain bike events. The Partners will explore the development of new tracks and trails, including a multi-day mountain biking experience for families and / or mountain biking enthusiasts.

**Swimming** in natural waterholes is a hugely appealing activity for visitors to refresh and cool off, particularly in hot weather. Swimming is available for visitors at Ellery Creek Big Hole, Redbank, Ormiston, Hugh River, Finke Two Mile and Glen Helen Gorges.

### **The Larapinta Trail**

The Larapinta Trail is an internationally renowned long distance walking trail, traversing some of the iconic attractions of the West MacDonnell Ranges and providing links to other walking tracks. Beginning at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station, the Trail passes through many gaps and sheltered gorges, climbing steeply over the rugged ranges, providing stunning views and opportunities to admire the spectacular landscape which ends at Mt Sonder, the highest point of the Trail.

The Trail has 12 stages, each a 1-2-day walk. Itineraries for visitors seeking longer walks in relative safety and comfort are also catered for. Camping is permitted for walkers at all trailheads and designated sites along the Trail.

Use of the Larapinta Trail has grown among commercial operators. Offering guided experiences and "glamping" options, visitors can participate in walking tours inclusive of safari camp style accommodation at private sites with basic facilities and meals, without having to carry a heavy backpack. The Trail is described by Australian Geographic as "one of the world's best long distance arid zone walks".

**Sharing Culture** Market research tell us that many visitors seek authentic and engaging experiences with local Aboriginal people to learn about their lives, history and heritage, culture, lifestyle and art. Spending time with Traditional Owners fosters an appreciation of the living Aboriginal culture of Tjoritja / West MacDonnell and encourages visitors to enjoy the Park with due respect.

Some Traditional Owners are interested in the opportunities tourism can provide. Local Aranda people have the opportunity to develop their own tour operations and share their stories with visitors. This could be done through personal contact with Aboriginal guides, cultural story-telling, bush tucker tours and other cultural activities such as art and crafts. A strategic regional approach and a partnership between the tourism industry and Aboriginal communities is required to develop Aboriginal tourism products.

**Understanding visitor needs** It is vitally important for the Joint Management Partners to stay abreast of, and be responsive to trends in nature-based tourism and recreation. The global tourism market seeks a mix of active, adventurous, fun, exciting and unique holidays. There is real demand for immersive, life-changing experiences including interactive, authentic cultural experiences with Traditional Owners on country. Counting visitor numbers, monitoring visitor patterns and trends and measuring satisfaction is essential to inform sound planning of services, facilities and experiences.

**Developing Quality Experiences** The Parks and Wildlife Commission is committed to developing Visitor Experience Development Plans for its major parks, including Tjoritja. The Plan will set the direction for investing in outstanding visitor experiences and be informed by the partners, the local tourism industry and the needs and interests of the nature-based tourism market.

## Objective and Strategies

**Manage and develop safe, sustainable and outstanding world-class experiences that connect visitors to the Park and its people.**

- Develop a Visitor Experience Development Plan to identify new and improved visitor experiences that reflect visitor trends and support regional economic development. The Plan will:

- » Be developed by the Partners in close collaboration with the tourism industry.
- » Reflect the needs of visitors including immersive cultural experiences, unique events, accommodation, extended walks, mountain bike trails, bush camping, four-wheel driving and innovative interpretation.
- » Balance cultural and environmental sustainability while providing benefits to both the Park and Traditional Owners.
- » Encourage and support growth of Aboriginal tourism enterprises and cultural experiences, including joint ventures supported by the tourism industry.
- » Engage the community and provide opportunities for ongoing feedback and adaptive management.
- » Be reviewed every five years and as required to ensure currency with marketing trends and visitor satisfaction.
- Work collaboratively with the tourism marketing arm of the NT Government and the tourism industry to promote the Park as a “must-do” visitor destination.
- Maintain the highest standards of visitor safety with ongoing monitoring, maintenance, education and risk assessment for park facilities and visitor management practices.
- Pursue external resourcing opportunities such as tourism industry grants programs and initiatives to support the delivery of visitor experiences.
- Develop a cultural awareness and education program for tour operators, the broader tourism industry and independent travellers to encourage supportive relationships, sharing of appropriate cultural stories and Park values with visitors.
- Improve understanding of our visitors through targeted data collection and research to ensure their comfort, enjoyment and safety.
- Protect the Park’s natural character and aesthetic value and ensure that development is carefully sited and sustainably designed.



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# APPENDIX 1

## Threatened flora

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	CONSERVATION STATUS	
		"EPBC Act" Cwlth*1	"TPWC Act"*2
APIACEAE <i>Actinotus schwarzii</i> . F.Muell.	Desert Flannel Flower	VU	VU
ASTERACEAE <i>Minuria tridens</i> (D.A.Cooke) Lander.	Minnie Daisy	VU	VU
ASTERACEAE <i>Olearia macdonnellensis</i> D.A.Cooke.	(A daisy)	EN	VU
CYPERACEAE <i>Carex fascicularis</i> Sol. ex Boott.	-	-	VU
EUPHORBIACEAE <i>Ricinocarpos gloria-medii</i> J.H.Willis.	Glory-of-the-Centre	VU	NT
PTERIDACEAE <i>Adiantum capillus- veneris</i> L.	Venus-Hair Fern	-	VU
LAMIACEAE <i>Prostanthera schultzii</i> F.Muell. ex Tate.	-	VU	VU
MYRTACEAE <i>Babingtonia behrii</i> (Schltdl.) A.R.Bean.	-	-	VU
RANUNCULACEAE <i>Clematis decipiens</i> H.Eichler ex Jeanes.	-	-	VU
ZAMIACEAE <i>Macrozamia macdonnellii</i> (F.Muell. ex Miq.) A.DC.	MacDonnell Ranges Cycad	VU	NT

As at July 2017 there are approximately 700 Flora species recorded in Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park. For a complete list refer to NR Maps: [www.nrmaps.nt.gov.au/](http://www.nrmaps.nt.gov.au/)

# APPENDIX 2

## Threatened fauna

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	CONSERVATION STATUS	
		"EPBC Act" Cwlth*1	"TPWC Act" *2
<i>Zyzomys pedunculatus</i>	Central Rock-rat	EN	EN
<i>Petrogale lateralis</i>	Black-footed rock wallaby,	VU	NT
<i>Polytelis alexandrae</i>	Princess Parrot	VU	VU
<i>Croitana aestiva</i>	Desert Sand Skipper	EN	-
<i>Liopholis slateri</i>	Slater's Skink	EN	VU
<i>Trichosurus vulpecula vulpecula</i>	Common Brushtail Possum	-	EN
<i>Chalmydogobius japalpa</i>	Finke Goby	-	VU
<i>Bothriembryon spenceri</i>	Bulimulidae Land Snail	-	VU
<i>Semotrachia winneckiana</i>	Camaenidae Land Snail	-	VU
<i>Semotrachia elleryi</i>	Camaenidae Land Snail	-	VU
<i>Semotrachia runutjirbana</i>	Camaenidae Land Snail	-	VU

Species no longer occurring in the MAC Bioregion: *Cinclosoma castaneothorax marginatum* - Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush, *Leipoa ocellata* - Malleefowl, *Pezoporus occidentalis* - Night Parrot, *Erythrotriorchis radiatus* - Red Goshawk, *Dasyercus blythi* - Brush-tailed Mulgara, *Isoodon auratus auratus* - Golden Bandicoot, *Lagorchestes conspicillatus leichardti* - Spectacled Hare-wallaby, *Macroderma gigas* - Ghost Bat, *Macrotis lagotis* - Greater Bilby, *Rattus tunneyi* - Pale Field-rat, *Liopholis Kintorei* - Great Desert Skink.

Nationally extinct, extinct in the NT, or extinct in the wild, fauna which once occurred in the MAC Bioregion (cultural significance): *Bettongia lesueur graii (inland)* - Burrowing Bettong, *Bettongia penicillata* - Brush-tailed Bettong, *Chaeropus ecaudatus* - Pig-footed Bandicoot, *Dasyurus geoffroi geoffroi* - Western Quoll, *Lagorchestes asomatus* - Central Hare-wallaby, *Lagorchestes hirsutus (central mainland form)* - Rufous Hare-wallaby or Mala, *Leporillus apicalis* - Lesser Stick-nest Rat, *Macrotis leucura* - Lesser Bilby, *Myrmecobius fasciatus* - Numbat, *Notomys amplus* - Short-tailed Hopping-mouse, *Notomys longicaudatus* - Long-tailed Hopping-mouse, *Onychogalea lunata* - Crescent Nailtail Wallaby, *Perameles eremiana* - Desert Bandicoot, *Phascogale calura* - Red-tailed Phascogale, *Pseudomys fieldi* - Alice Springs Mouse, *Amytornis modestus modestus* - Thick-billed Grasswren (MacDonnell Ranges subsp.).

July 2017 there are 279 recorded fauna species in Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park. For the complete records refer to NR Maps: [www.nrmmaps.nt.gov.au/](http://www.nrmmaps.nt.gov.au/)

\*1 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (Commonwealth)

EN – Endangered

VU – Vulnerable

CR – Critically Endangered

\*2 Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (Northern Territory)

VU – Vulnerable

EN - Endangered

EX – Extinct

NT – Near Threatened





[WWW.DTC.NT.GOV.AU](http://WWW.DTC.NT.GOV.AU)





## **TOURISM N**

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### CHARTER ~ BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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This charter sets out the role and responsibilities of the Commissioners of Tourism NT, collectively referred to as the Board of Commissioners (the Board), and various procedural matters. It is not an 'all inclusive' document and should be read in conjunction with the *Tourism NT Act 2012* (the *Act*).

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#### **ROLE**

The primary role of the Board is to provide strategic direction to Tourism NT and strategic advice to the Minister. It provides leadership and vision through strategy formulation and policy development whilst meeting its legislative, financial and governance obligations.

#### **STATUTORY FRAMEWORK**

Tourism NT is a Commission established pursuant to Sections 5 and 11 of the *Act*. It comprises the Chief Executive Officer and at least six other Commissioners appointed by the Minister.

#### ***Enabling Legislation***

Sections 7, 8 and 9 of the *Act* determine the functions and powers of the Commission which are subject to ministerial control. The functions of Tourism NT are:-

- to market the Territory as a desirable visitor destination;
- to encourage and facilitate the sustainable growth of the tourism industry in the Territory;
- to advise the Minister on all matters relating to tourism in the Territory; and
- any other functions conferred on it by this or any other Act.

As a statutory authority, the Board assumes a public trust and confidence by virtue of its role in the public administration. It has a fiduciary responsibility for the expenditure of taxpayers' money and the custody and control of public assets.

#### ***Other Legislation***

In addition to its enabling legislation, the Board must ensure compliance with obligations placed upon it by other legislation including, but not limited to:-

- *Financial Management Act 2014*
- *Procurement Act 1995*
- *Audit Act 2011*
- *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2012*
- *Information Act 2016*
- *Ombudsman Act 2016*



- *Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act 2016*
- *Work Health Administration Act 2016*
- *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2016*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 2015*
- *Competition and Consumer Act 2010 (Cth)*
- *Trade Marks Act 1995 (Cth)*
- *Copyright Act 1968 (Cth)*
- *Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Act 2000*
- NB: As a public authority, Tourism NT is exempt from the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)*.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### **General**

The Board is accountable to the Minister for the overall performance of Tourism NT. Essential responsibilities include:-

- Strategic Direction – setting the strategies, goals, action plans, policies and performance targets to meet stakeholder expectations;
- Resources – allocate to management the resources to achieve the strategic direction including budget, staff, systems and tools;
- Performance – monitor performance against strategies and plans, including taking action to leverage opportunities or address weaknesses within the external operating environment;
- Compliance – ensure there are adequate processes in place to comply with statutory obligations, legal and accounting requirements and government policy and practices.
- Risk – ensure that the risks to which the organisation is exposed are clearly identified and that suitable processes are in place to manage or mitigate those risks.
- Accountability – report progress to stakeholders, most notably the Northern Territory Government, and members of the NT tourism industry and broader community.
- Conduct – set the tone for organisational behaviour by acting ethically, modelling the correct values, adhering to the Code of Conduct and requiring management and staff to do the same.

In fulfilling these responsibilities, the Board must remain independent and manage the interests of all stakeholders and the wider public interest.

### **Chairperson**

In addition to the above, the Chairperson is responsible for:-

- leading and directing the activities of the Board;
- setting the Board agenda;
- conducting Board meetings and other business;
- ensuring the efficient and effective operation of the Board;
- liaising with and reporting to the Minister;
- inducting and supporting Board Commissioners;
- reviewing individual Commissioners' performance; and
- working with the Chief Executive Officer to oversee the performance of the organisation.

### **Chief Executive Officer**

The Chief Executive Officer is the primary link between the Board and the organisation and responsible for:-

- managing the day-to-day operations of Tourism NT including operational, administrative and marketing functions;
- implementing the strategic direction, performance, risk and compliance initiatives set by the Board and other decisions;
- communicating Board decisions, policies and priorities to staff and presenting organisational reports, submissions and budgets to the Board; and
- employment and management of staff.

### ***Board Secretary***

The Board Secretary provides administrative support to the Board and is relied upon to follow correct procedures and to advise the Board on public sector regulations, accountability standards and legislative requirements. The Board Secretary will be an appropriately experienced staff member of Tourism NT responsible for:-

- preparing the agenda in consultation with the Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer;
- compiling supporting documentation and distributing meeting papers to Commissioners;
- recording minutes of meetings of the Board and retaining appropriate records of the Board's activities;
- if required, arranging for members of Tourism NT management team, advisors or observers to attend a meeting of the Board; and
- keeping abreast of, and informing Commissioners, of any changes to legislative requirements or governance expectations.

## **COMMITTEES**

The Board may establish committees as a mechanism by which to enhance its effectiveness through further detailed oversight and supervision of areas of special risk critical to the success of Tourism NT.

A committee established by the Board will be chaired by a Commissioner, other than the Chairperson or Chief Executive Officer, and have a written mandate outlining its role, composition, responsibilities, meeting and reporting requirements.

In keeping with best practice, the Board will establish a Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC). The charter for the FRAC will be published on Tourism NT's corporate website.

## **ACCESS TO INDEPENDENT ADVICE**

The Board may obtain independent professional advice to assist it in the proper exercise of its powers and responsibilities.

A Commissioner may obtain independent professional advice to assist him or her in the proper exercise of powers and discharge of duties as a Board member, provided that the Commissioner has obtained prior approval from the Chairperson, or if the Commissioner is the Chairperson, prior approval from the Board.

The Chairperson may agree that the cost of a Commissioner's independent advice be paid by Tourism NT. If the Commissioner is the Chair, the Chair must seek agreement from the Board for such cost to be paid by Tourism NT.

If a Commissioner obtains independent advice which is paid for by Tourism NT they must provide to the Board as soon as practicable a copy of the written advice received, subject to confidentiality and privilege considerations.

## LIABILITY AND INDEMNITY

In accordance with section 29 of the *Act*, a Commissioner is not civilly or criminally liable for an act done or omitted to be done in good faith. Legal opinion provided to Tourism NT considers section 29 provides sufficient protection from liability and it is not necessary to purchase additional insurance such as Directors and Officers insurance. Nonetheless, Commissioners need to understand the risks and liabilities associated with their role and need to exercise a reasonable degree of care, skill and diligence in carrying out their responsibilities.

The Board may give consideration to purchasing personal injury insurance for Commissioners not covered by government workers compensation arrangements, particularly where members are required to undertake significant travel as part of their role.

## APPOINTMENT AND CESSATION OF COMMISSIONERS

The Minister may appoint a person as a Commissioner of Tourism NT in accordance with Sections 11(2), 13 and 14 of the *Act*. The Minister may also terminate the appointment of a Commissioner pursuant to Section 18 of the *Act*.

An appointed Commissioner holds office for a term not exceeding two years, after which he or she may be eligible for reappointment. A Commissioner may resign his or her appointment by giving written notice to the Minister.

### **Leave of Absence**

A Commissioner may be granted leave of absence for health, work or some other valid reason which impacts his or her capacity to participate fully as a member of the Board. Commissioners seeking a leave of absence must, as soon as practicably possible, submit a written request to the Chairperson outlining the reasons for and duration of the planned absence and any other relevant information.

In deciding whether to grant a leave of absence, the Chairperson may consult with the Minister and will consider the:-

- circumstances surrounding the request;
- Commissioner's remaining length of tenure; and
- overall performance and extent of the Commissioner's contribution to the Board since being appointed.

The Chairperson will confirm in writing whether a request for leave of absence has been granted. At each meeting of the Board for which a Commissioner who has been granted leave of absence is not in attendance, it must be recorded in the minutes that a leave of absence has been granted.

## DELEGATIONS

The Board may delegate any of its powers or functions in accordance with Section 10 of the *Act*.

A copy of each delegation will be provided to the person holding the delegated power. The Board Secretary will retain a copy of each delegation.

The Board will review and, if required, update or revoke delegations annually.

## BEHAVIOUR

### **Code of Conduct**

Commissioners will subscribe to the Board of Commissioners' Code of Conduct (the Code), which articulates expectations regarding personal and professional behaviour. On appointment, or reappointment, each Commissioner must provide a signed declaration of commitment to abiding by the Code. Failure to comply with the Code may result in the Minister terminating the appointment of a Commissioner.

### **Conflict of Interest**

At each Board meeting the Chairperson will seek declarations of interests from all Commissioners present. If a Commissioner has a personal interest in a matter being considered by Tourism NT, he or she must disclose it in accordance with sections 25 and 26 of the *Act*. Disclosure of personal interests must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

If a Commissioner has a personal interest in a matter that requires disclosure he or she must absent him or herself from the meeting for the duration of discussion regarding the relevant agenda item and not take part in any deliberation or decision regarding the matter.

### **Confidentiality**

All deliberations, decisions and activities of the Board are confidential unless expressly stated otherwise by the Chairperson or his or her delegate. The penalty for unauthorised disclosure of confidential information is detailed in section 30 of the *Act*.

## MEETINGS

Sections 20 to 24 of the *Act* detail Tourism NT's obligations regarding meetings.

The Chairperson has determined six meetings will be held each year. The specific time, place and duration for each meeting will be decided by the Board. Meetings may be face to face, teleconference or via videoconference.

### **Board Agenda and Papers**

In consultation with the Chairperson and the Chief Executive Officer, the Board Secretary will prepare the agenda for a meeting setting out the matters to be discussed and referencing all relevant reports and submissions relating to each agenda item.

The Board Secretary will aim to distribute the agenda and related papers to each Commissioner at least seven days before the date of the scheduled board meeting.

Unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson, at each board meeting the:-

- Chief Executive Officer will report on any major matter affecting the operations of Tourism NT including a summary of the salient issues arising from the report; and
- Chief Financial Officer will provide a Summary Financial Report detailing the performance of Tourism NT against its budget and reporting on any abnormal items or matters which should be drawn to the attention of the Board.
- Chairpersons of the Board Committees are to submit a report on activities and findings to the Board, together with any recommended action.

Matters requiring decisions of the Board should be submitted to the Board in writing through the Board Secretary, setting out:-

- the subject matter;
- policy implications for the Northern Territory Government;
- advice on any legal requirements;
- the need for consideration of competition policy issues where exclusive arrangements are being proposed;
- a clear recommendation on the course the Board should take;
- confirmation that any proposed expenditure is within budget and that accountability arrangements are adequate;
- current and future funding and resource implications including staff;
- any consultation process that has been undertaken;
- proposed implementation timetable and next steps; and
- performance measures that will apply if the initiative is adopted.

The staff member of Tourism NT responsible for the matter may be required to brief the Board and answer any questions.

### ***Chairing Meetings***

The Chairperson must preside at all meetings at which he or she is present. If the Chairperson is not present at a meeting, Commissioners must elect another member present to preside.

### ***Quorum***

A quorum for a board meeting is constituted by a majority (i.e. more than half) of Commissioners.

If a Commissioner is required to remove him or herself from deliberations of the Board due a personal interest, the remaining members constitute a quorum for the purpose of any deliberation or decision at that meeting for that matter only.

### ***Resolutions***

A resolution of the Board is to be determined by the majority vote of the Commissioners present at a meeting. The Chairperson has a deliberative and casting vote.

The Board may also pass a resolution without a board meeting being held if all the Commissioners entitled to vote on the resolution sign a document containing a statement that they are in favour. Email signatures are accepted for this purpose. Separate copies of a document may be used for signing if the wording of the resolution and statement is identical in each copy. The resolution is passed when the last of the Commissioners sign. The Board Secretary must keep a record of resolutions passed in accordance with this process.

### ***Records***

The Board Secretary will prepare minutes of meetings of the Board and retain appropriate records of all Board activities.

### ***Attendance by Observers***

The Chairperson may invite relevant persons to interact with the Board at its meeting as an observer. This may include that the observer:-



- be provided with some, or all, Board papers on the day of, or prior to, a Board meeting; and
- where considered appropriate by the Chairperson, participate in all or part of the discussions of the Board including responding to questions.

The Chairperson must not permit the observer to seek amendments to any board papers, vote at the meeting or influence the decision making of the Board.

## **EVALUATING BOARD PERFORMANCE**

Good governance requires the performance of the Board to be evaluated at least annually. Whilst the Minister is responsible the appointment of Commissioners, it is incumbent upon the Chairperson to assess the performance and conduct of the Board. This includes reviewing individual Commissioner's performance, other than that of the Chief Executive Officer whose performance is subject to the application of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act*.

The biennial stakeholder engagement survey contains specific questions around Board performance.

## **PUBLICATION AND REVIEW OF CHARTER**

This Charter is available on Tourism NT's website at [www.tourismnt.com.au](http://www.tourismnt.com.au). The Board will review this Charter annually to ensure it remains consistent with the Board's objectives and responsibilities.

Approved

Michael Bridge

Chairperson

Date



# WATARRKA NATIONAL PARK

## JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN

July 2018





# WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT CULTURE AND COUNTRY

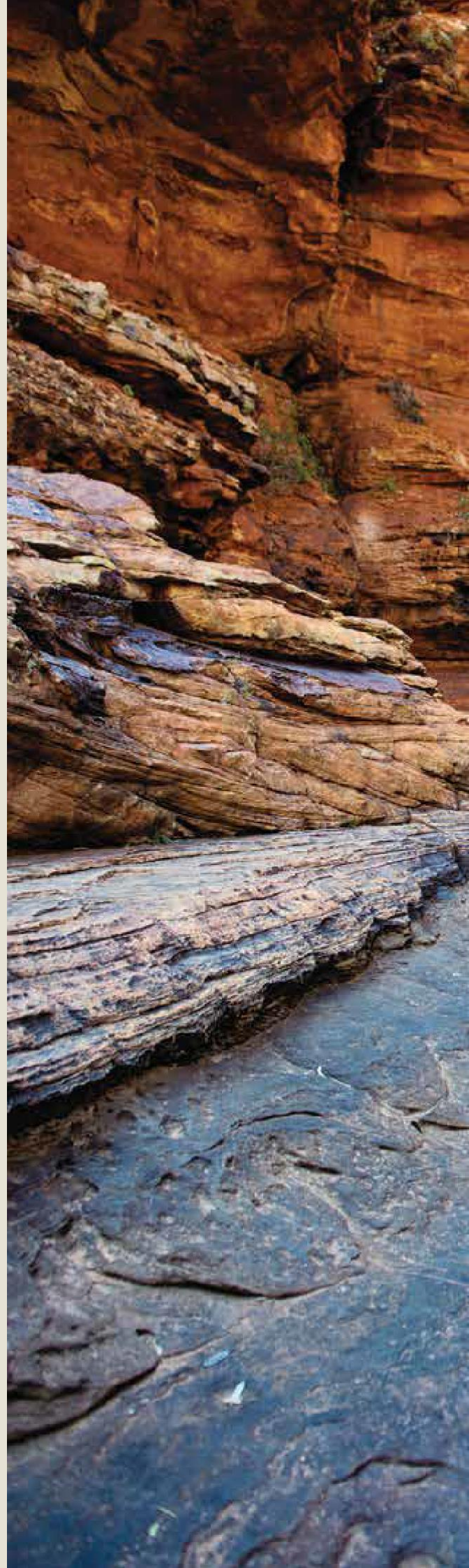
*“Both partners, both ways – making decisions and working together on country.”*

The Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory (PWCNT) present the Joint Management Plan for Watarrka National Park. As Joint Management Partners, we have developed this Plan with support and advice from the Central Land Council and other community members including tourism industry representatives. The Plan defines our shared vision, objectives and strategies to deliver effective joint management, care for culture and country and support exciting, memorable and safe visitor experiences.

The assistance of the Central Land Council in facilitating consultations with Traditional Owners is gratefully acknowledged.

This Plan has been prepared consistent with section 25AD of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation (TPWC) Act*. It supersedes the 1991 Plan of Management for Watarrka National Park and will remain in effect until it is amended or replaced by a new Plan.

*Spoken by the Traditional Owners throughout this document*







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Cover: Watarrka National Park

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – ABOUT THIS PLAN

*“There’s more to the park than just the Canyon.”*

Watarrka National Park is an ancient living landscape, home to Anangu who share their country and culture with people from around the world. Everything that can be found in the park from the people, the plants, the animals and the rock formations are united by the laws of Tjukurpa. For Anangu, Tjukurpa is a religion, law, a philosophy, the guide that inextricably connects them to the surrounding landscape. When Anangu look at the landscape of Watarrka, they don’t see “just the Canyon”. Ancient sandstone features remind them of the creation ancestors and stories teaching them of appropriate behaviour, relationships and how to care for country. The land provides sustainability, shelter and food, all of this is part of Tjukurpa. With acknowledgement and respect of Tjukurpa also comes obligation - as custodians of the land, the Traditional Owners are responsible for country and are obliged to maintain and protect it.

The Traditional Owners and the Parks and Wildlife Commission work together, sharing cultural and scientific knowledge to manage the Park and to “look after country properly – both partners, both ways”. We call this Joint Management.<sup>1</sup> As Joint Management Partners and with involvement from the wider community, we have developed the Draft Watarrka Joint Management Plan. The Plan defines our shared vision and will assist and direct us in making decisions to manage the natural and cultural values of the Park.

Our priorities are:

1. **Making Joint Management work** - Meeting the needs of Traditional Owners to maintain their connection to country and to benefit from joint management arrangements.

Together, guided by this Plan we will make decisions that fulfil our priorities, while allowing for adaptability and flexibility as we continue to learn about and share both ways. The Joint Management Committee governs the delivery of our outcomes and will support and facilitate training, employment, and commercial enterprise development for Traditional Owners with the support of relevant agencies.

2. **Looking after country and culture** - Protecting the outstanding natural and cultural values of the Park.

Following the laws of Tjukurpa and working together as Joint Management Partners, we look after the flora, fauna, landscapes and places of cultural and historical importance over an area spanning 1 057 km<sup>2</sup>. Within the Park’s ancient geological features are more than 170 recorded rock art sites, historical sites, over 600 recorded plant species and significant mammal and reptile species. We use both traditional and scientific knowledge to care for Watarrka.

3. **Visitor experiences** - Providing a range of exciting, authentic and engaging experiences for visitors and ensuring the Park continues as a key tourist attraction and driver of the region’s economy

Watarrka provides visitors with unique opportunities to explore breathtaking gorges on foot or by air, relax by secluded rock holes, experience the rich diversity of plant and animal species, and be inspired by incredible geological formations, all within an ancient cultural landscape. About 250,000 people from around the world visit the Park each year (2016), taking home unforgettable memories. A visit to Watarrka creates lifelong advocates, inspiring and encouraging others to come and experience the incredible cultural and natural values for themselves. Traditional Owners welcome you to connect and learn about their home, they want you to have an enjoyable but safe holiday, so that you can go home and share the story of Watarrka with your family and friends.

The Park’s visitor numbers create significant opportunities for high quality commercial enterprises, to further enhance the visitor experience and encourage longer stays in the Park. Traditional Owners are already providing tourism services and wish to continue developing new experiences both as independent businesses and in partnerships with experienced operators. The Parks and Wildlife Commission is committed to Visitor Experience Development Plans for the Territory’s most visited parks, including Watarrka. These Plans will ensure sustainable tourism opportunities providing benefits to the Traditional Owners, the Park and the tourism industry.



*“Watarrka” is the Anangu name for the Umbrella Bush (Acacia ligulata).*

<sup>1</sup> The *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation (TPWC) Act* defines the joint management partners as the traditional Aboriginal Owners of the Park (Traditional Owners) and the Territory. The Territory will carry out its joint management obligations through the Parks and Wildlife Commission. For the purposes of this Joint Management Plan, references to the Parks and Wildlife Commission as a joint management partner should read as reference to the Territory.

# OUR VISION

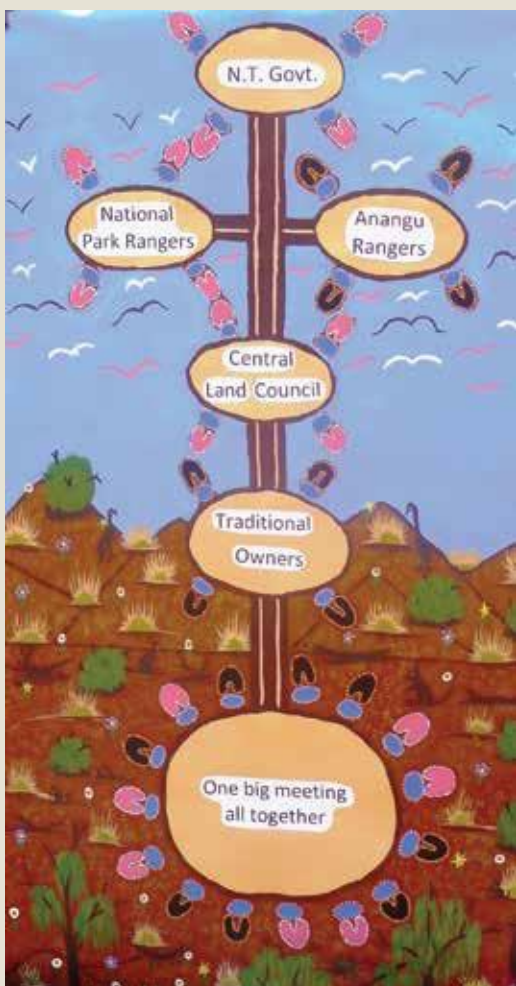
*“Both partners, both ways – making decisions and working together on country.”*

The Joint Management Partners of Watarrka National Park will work together and support each other in ways that demonstrate respect, and continue to develop a mutual understanding for and of each other, the land and future partnerships.

## Traditional Owners view of joint management

“The Government send messages through. National Parks are working for NT Government. Anangu rangers work side by side park rangers – equal, working on behalf of Aboriginal people. Pink are European people, blue is a table, putting answers on the table, black is Aboriginal people, putting answers on the table. The one down the bottom is all of us together, putting our answers on the table. The picture is about the National Park, the trees, the grass, the animals, everything. It’s got Spinifex, turkey, kangaroo, emu, bilby, mala.”

© Sadie Williams 2008



Our Vision for the Park:

- Anangu are involved in decision making and benefit from joint management.
- Country is looked after properly, nature is protected and native plants and animals thrive.
- Strong culture is shared with visitors.
- Unforgettable, exciting and safe visitor experiences create lifelong park advocates.

# PARK SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUES

*“This place is special in many different ways.”*

Watarrka National Park (1057 km<sup>2</sup>) is located about 330km south west of Alice Springs (Figure 1). The Park protects one of Australia’s most stunning natural and cultural environments, contributing significantly to biodiversity conservation and regional tourism with strong employment opportunities for local Aboriginal people.

Watarrka is a living cultural landscape with strong cultural, spiritual and historical significance that forms part of their contemporary identities. Traditional Owners maintain the integrity of their land by following and teaching cultural and ecological knowledge from the Dreaming to their descendants. Traditional Owners are looking forward to the new opportunities afforded by joint management. They are keen to be involved in all management programs on the Park and spend time on country to pass on important knowledge to young people, each other and Park staff.

Watarrka is an internationally significant conservation area. Time has carved great buttresses out of the colourful sandstone of the George Gill Range, providing refuge to a variety of unique native flora and fauna living among domed rock formations, range-top “perched dunes”, flood-out areas and sheltered spring-fed gullies. These habitats support the richest assemblage of plants of all the national parks in Central Australia, with over 600 species recorded, as well as providing refuge to a diversity of animals including 20 native mammal species, 126 birds, 71 reptiles, 7 frogs and 109 taxa of invertebrate species.

Watarrka is a world class tourist attraction. Attracting about 250,000 visitors (2016), Watarrka boasts dramatic landscapes, high quality nature based tourism activities and opportunities to experience authentic Aboriginal culture. Central to the



experience is the spectacular scenery, from the sand dunes and desert oaks to the sudden contrast between the landscape and the Gill George Range, highlighted by Kings Canyon itself. The six kilometre walk around the Canyon is celebrated as one of

Central Australia's best walks, immersing visitors in a range of habitats including waterholes, intriguing rock formations and Eden-like "gardens" of native vegetation while being inspired by stunning views.

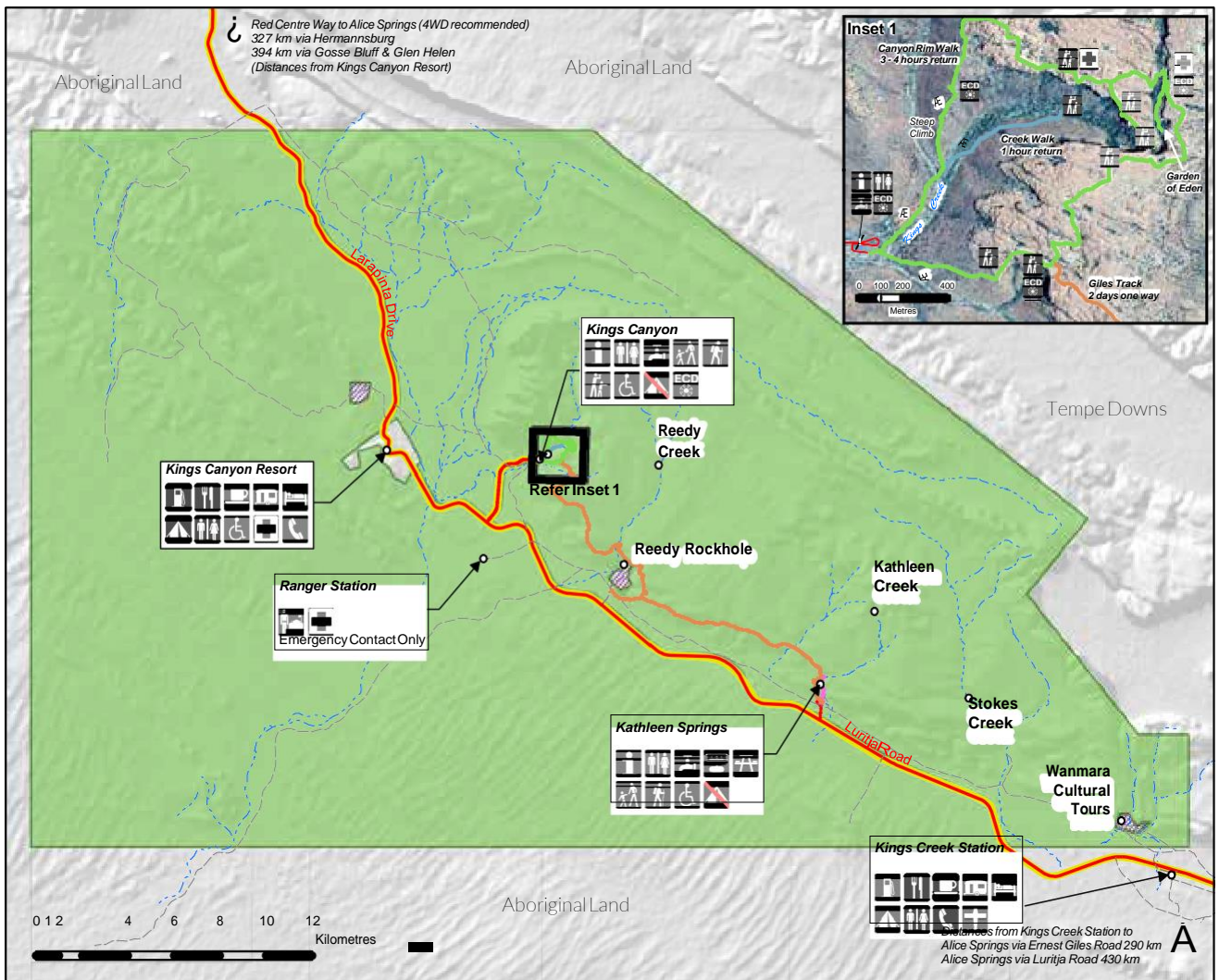
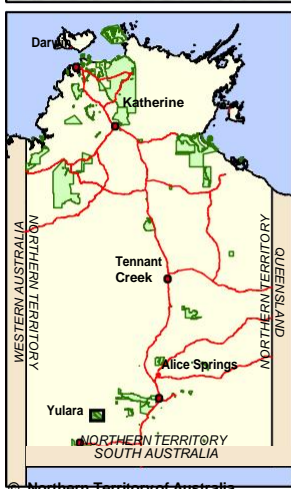


Figure 1



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**DATA SOURCE:**

Cadastral, Topographic, Road Centreline data sourced from Information Services Section, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics

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ALOS image product supplied by Geoscience Australia.

**Legend**

- Kathleen Springs Walk
  - Kings Canyon Rim Walk
  - Kings Creek Walk
  - The Giles Track
  - Road
  - Management Track (No Public Access)
  - Red Centre Way
  - Watercourse
  - Watarrka National Park
  - Community Living Area (No Public Access)
  - Cadastre
- 
- Information
  - Toilets
  - Ranger Station
  - Parking Area
  - Drinking Water
  - Picnic Facilities
  - BBQ
  - First Aid
  - Short Walks
  - Overnight Walks
  - Lookouts
  - Wheelchair Access
  - Emergency Call Device
  - No Camping
  - Camping
  - Fuel
- 
- Meals
  - Cafe
  - Accommodation
  - Caravan Camping
  - Telephone
  - Plane Landing

**Watarrka National Park**

## Our Story - The Traditional Owners of Watarrka National Park

*“We call ourselves Anangu.”*

*Watarrka National Park lies within the traditional lands of the Martutjarra people. Our land has a long history of human occupation and adaptation by our Traditional Owners. Country within and beyond Watarrka National Park is central to our identity.*

*We call ourselves Anangu, a word that refers to ‘people’ through the Western Desert.*

*Under Tjukurpa Aboriginal Law as Traditional Owners of Watarrka National Park, we belong to certain places and Dreamings of Anangu Land. Each of our landholding groups belongs to a country which is named after an important site. Each group belongs to a set of significant sites which are associated with one or more dreaming’s, this is our country or ngurra. We think of country in terms of our dreamings, where our stories and sacred places lie, there are no physical boundaries. We say “the whole country is special, inside and outside the Park”. On the Park, the countries Ulpanyali, Watarrka, Lilla and Wanmarra are identified with predominant dreaming tracks and particular families. These countries extend beyond the Park’s boundaries.*

Anangu refers to people belonging to a certain country as *ngurraritja*. Ngurraritja means “belonging to country”, “owner/holder of land” as well as “spirit of the land.” Generally, the Traditional Owners belong to land through their *mama* (father), *tjamu* (father’s father, mother’s father), *ngunyju* (mother) and *kami* (mother’s father and mother’s mother), as well as through their birthplaces and death/burial sites of relatives. While people connected with a country through descent seem to have the strongest connections to a country, knowledge, in particular ritual knowledge and long-term residence, enhances the status of a ngurraritja significantly.

The ngurraritja of a country are complemented by people who are called *ngurra kutju ngurrara* meaning “people who are likely to share a camp” or “one’s countrymen.” These people usually belong to a neighbouring country, a shared dreaming track or both and are also ngurraritja. They are important in assisting decision-making concerning country, the maintenance and performance of ceremonies and the transmission of ritual knowledge.

Traditional Owners of the Park have strong connections to *Yankunytjatjara* and *Pitjantjatjara* people in the south and *Pertame Arrernte* in the east. Religious and social ties allowed Anangu from surrounding regions to visit Watarrka for short ceremonial and recreational gatherings, or for extended periods during droughts.

To appreciate Traditional Owners’ persistence and involvement in management of the Park, it is necessary to understand both their deep connection to country and the dislocation they suffered through the occupation of the area by Europeans in the late nineteenth century through to the present day.

Diaries and journals kept by Ernest Giles as he passed through the area in 1872 and William Gosse in 1873 indicate their awareness of Aboriginal people through constant sightings of camp fire smoke but appear to have had little contact. These reports are confirmed by Traditional Owners who recall grandparents telling stories of “hiding from strange people who came on horses and camels.”

The establishment of pastoralism in the area in 1889 had a severe impact on Anangu and their culture. Pastoral activity severely reduced food, animal and foraging resources, effectively displacing Anangu from their country. There was often conflict and Anangu were forced into the relative safety of the George Gill Range, where they could access permanent rockholes under the cover of darkness. Areas such as Wanmarra (Bagot Springs), Lilla (Reedy Rockhole) and Watarrka (Kings Canyon) were especially affected. Some Anangu eventually obtained work on pastoral leases but many moved further away from their traditional lands. The people who survived these times found themselves living in a wide range of towns, missions and camps throughout the central region.

Today, many Traditional Owners have reconnected with their country, either living on the Park or visiting regularly with their families. Joint management enables Traditional Owners to continue practising traditions like hunting, gathering and ceremony, all crucial for keeping Tjukurpa strong and sharing it with younger generations.



# PROTECTING, MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING PARK VALUES

*“Even when away from our country we still held the culture together, still taught our kids the Tjukurpa. When you go to your country the song comes to you – it doesn’t matter that you’ve been away.”*

Together as Joint Management Partners we will:

- Build a strong relationship by respecting culture and differences and committing to understanding each other’s concepts of caring for country.
  - Assist Traditional Owners and their families in maintaining close connections and park access for traditional land use and bringing children to camp and hunt.
  - Keep culture strong and the spiritual, cultural and social beliefs, rights and aspirations of the younger generations alive.
  - Enhance visitor experiences by providing excellent natural and well-serviced settings; a range of immersive activities and products which create benefits for the Park and Traditional Owners; and support opportunities for the growth of Aboriginal tourism enterprises in both independent and joint ventures.
  - Deliver on Traditional Owner aspirations for economic development and employment through park management and tourism enterprises.
- Provide access and culturally appropriate information to help visitors gain an appreciation of culture while protecting the cultural economic and intellectual interests of Aboriginal people.
  - Build a better understanding of the Park including baseline data, monitoring and improving the use of information to support informed decision-making.
  - Protect our special places including sacred sites, heritage places, nationally significant waterholes, springs, plants and animals and spectacular rock formations of the George Gill Range.
  - Identify and act upon risks and regularly communicate with our visitors and the tourism industry, to ensure safe experiences when visiting the Park.
  - Involve the broader community in optimising the Park’s resourcing and improving the potential for funding, development and participation in other ongoing programs.
  - Promote positive interactions with the Park’s stakeholders, ensuring appropriate dispute resolution and mitigation processes are in place.











# THEME 1: MAKING JOINT MANAGEMENT WORK

“Working together and supporting each other.”

Principles for making Joint Management work:

- Respecting Traditional Owners rights to continue caring for country and keeping their culture strong.
- Engagement and employment of Traditional Owners in management operations is central to joint management success.
- Decision-making and accountability should be equally shared and Aboriginal decision-making processes must be respected.
- Time spent together on country is important for developing mutual trust, respect and understanding between the partners and of each partner’s roles.
- Resources are limited and must be efficiently used. Management priorities will be guided by the parks key values.
- Risks are identified and actions are put in place to minimise them.
- Joint management has to be checked to see that it is working well. It is important to keep improving.
- Public support for joint management is very important.

Encouraging a working relationship based on mutual understanding and respect is essential for joint management. Traditional Owners use the term “*ngapartji – ngapartji*” to describe this reciprocal, two-way co-operative approach to joint management. Also a shared understanding of *ngura* (country), *tjukurpa* (law and culture) and Aboriginal decision-making principles are fundamental to making good joint management decisions. Successful joint management will deliver benefits to Traditional Owners, visitors to the Park, the wider community and the conservation of the Park.

The Watarrka National Park land is freehold title, held by the Watarrka Land Trust on behalf of Traditional Owners, and leased to the Northern Territory for 99 years from 2012. The terms of joint management have authority in law under the TPWC Act, the Park Lease and an Indigenous Land Use Agreement registered under the *Native Title Act*. This Plan complies with these legal instruments.

The TPWC Act defines the joint management partners as the traditional Aboriginal Owners of the Park (Traditional Owners) and the Territory. The Act further defines the objective to jointly establish an equitable partnership to manage and maintain the Park as part of a comprehensive and representative system of parks and reserves in the Territory for the following purposes:

- (a) Benefiting both the Traditional Owners and the wider community;
- (b) Protecting biological diversity;
- (c) Serving visitor and community needs for education and enjoyment.

The TPWC Act also establishes the requirements of joint management plans and the role of the Central Land Council (CLC) in assisting joint management by representing and protecting the interests of the Traditional Owners.

Recognising, valuing and incorporating Aboriginal culture, knowledge and decision making and combining the land management skills and expertise of both partners is essential for an equitable partnership and successful joint management. A strong partnership will ensure the values of the Park are protected, visitors continue to have a safe and enjoyable experiences, stakeholders are informed and involved in decision-making, proposals are considered efficiently and employment and economic benefits for Traditional Owners are provided.

*“All Traditional Owners, can’t just talk to a couple of fellas, got to talk about it with everybody. Everybody’s got to be involved.”*

Clear roles and responsibilities are essential for joint management to ensure ‘good governance’.

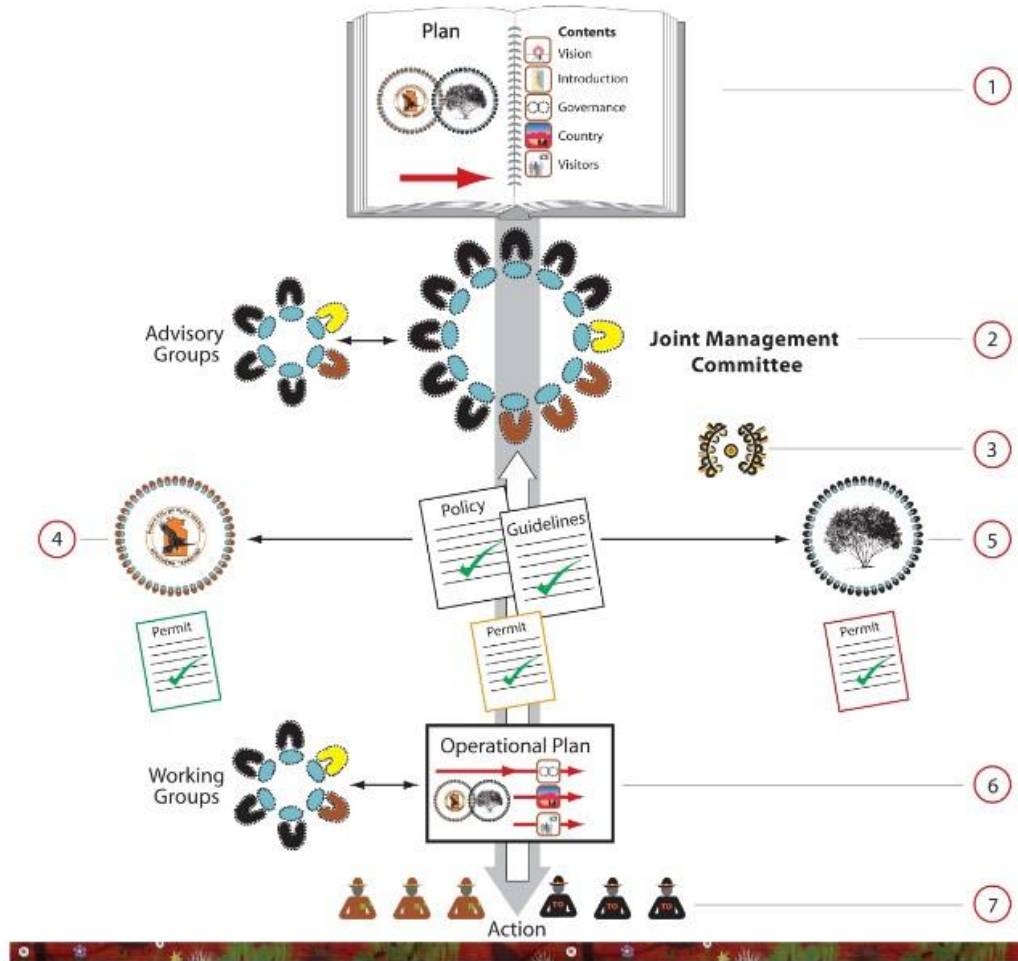
The **Parks and Wildlife Commission** resource and finance the Park’s ongoing day-to-day management. Parks and Wildlife Commission officers represent the Northern Territory in the joint management partnership.

**Traditional Owners** provide a vital role in the direction and management of the Park. Core members of landholding groups have responsibilities for decision-making and overseeing cultural protocol. Traditional Owners also have responsibilities for managing traditional knowledge and passing it on to the right people, looking after the land and its resources, maintaining sacred sites and keeping the country alive. Traditional Owners are responsible to the land, their law and culture.

The partners recognise that joint management is an ongoing learning process requiring an adaptive approach that respects the principles of making joint management work. A Joint Management Committee (JMC) has been formed, consisting of representative Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Commission staff.

Decisions made by the Partners follow the Decision-Making Structure (see Figure 2) which incorporates Traditional Owner decision-making principles. Traditional Owners want to be involved in all aspects of park management, including operational planning. They want to be involved in making decisions at the same level as senior park staff. The Decision-Making Framework (Table 1) provides clear roles and responsibilities of the Partners.

# Decision Making Structure



## Shared decision making and planning

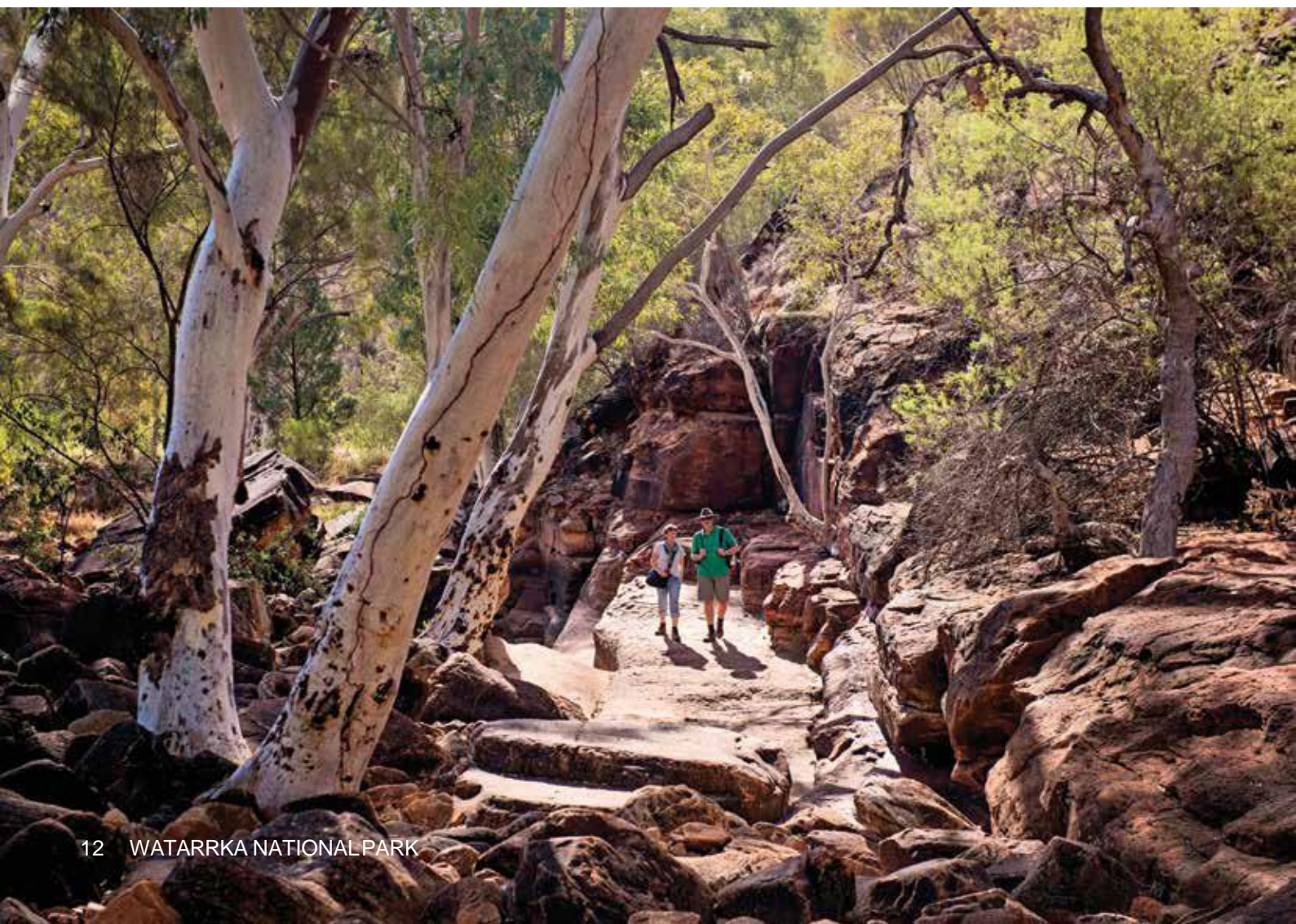
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1 <b>Joint Management Plan</b><br/>An agreement between the Joint Management Partners about managing the Park together.</p>   | <p>5 <b>Traditional Owners</b><br/>The full Traditional Owner group will be consulted for large, complex and culturally sensitive permits, or those that cannot be approved by the Joint management Committee.</p>  |
| <p>2 <b>Joint Management Committee</b><br/>A representative decision making body that will meet twice a year to: approve local policies and guidelines to guide decision making; approve annual Operational Plans.</p> | <p>6 <b>Operational Plans</b><br/>Annual plans which set out activities agreed by the Joint management Partners, reviewed each year. Small <b>Working Groups</b> of interested Traditional Owners and Park staff will develop policies, guidelines and information as needed.</p> |
| <p>3 <b>Central Land Council</b><br/>Central Land Council is responsible for consulting with and protecting the interests of Traditional Owners.</p>   | <p>7 <b>Action</b><br/>Rangers and Traditional Owners carry out agreed management under the Joint Management and Operational Plan.</p>  |
| <p>4 <b>Parks and Wildlife Commission</b><br/>Senior Park staff will approve standard permits that require no special access and are consistent with Traditional Owner's wishes.</p>                                   |   |

Figure 2



Table 1: Decision-making Framework

Role of the Joint Management Committee	Role of Park Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise authority and accountability granted to it by the PWCNT and wider group of Traditional Owners.</li> <li>• Set strategic direction, develop and improve management strategies including cultural heritage, healthy country / conservation and visitor development.</li> <li>• Make decisions by consensus.</li> <li>• Set policy and procedure that applies to Watarrka consistent with broader PWCNT policy.</li> <li>• Assess and endorse commercial and development proposals.</li> <li>• Monitor and evaluate management performance.</li> <li>• Take advice from the wider Traditional Owner group.</li> <li>• Consult with community stakeholders and wider group of Traditional Owners as appropriate.</li> <li>• Delegate tasks to a decision-making authority such as advisory or working groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day to day management of the Park.</li> <li>• Implement programs, policy and procedure as approved by the JMC or working group.</li> <li>• Maximise on-ground participation of Traditional Owners in managing the Park.</li> <li>• Implement programs and routine activities in line with approved plans.</li> <li>• Issue permits according to policy and procedure.</li> <li>• Prepare Operational Plans and works proposals for consideration and endorsement of the JMC.</li> </ul>





## Objective and Strategies

**A strong and equitable partnership protects Watarrka's natural and cultural values, ensures visitors have safe and enjoyable experiences and social, economic and employment benefits are realised by Traditional Owners and the wider community.**

- The JMC will oversee strategic direction of the Park. A more flexible and adaptive management style may be adopted, if and when the Partners feel this is needed.
- Meetings on country and dedicated country camps will be held to provide the opportunity for Traditional Owners to visit and discuss country issues.
- The Decision-Making structure will be used to support planning and operational Park management.
- A monitoring and evaluation program will inform actions to maintain effective governance.
- Governance training will be provided to the Partners to give them the tools and skills to work effectively in the partnership, with attention given to needs identified by the monitoring and evaluation program.
- Cross-cultural training for staff will be encouraged.
- Any proposal not addressed in this Plan will be openly considered by the Partners.





## THEME 2: LOOKING AFTER COUNTRY AND CULTURE

*“Ngura and Tjukurpa are number one – follow that one”*

Principles for looking after country and culture:

- Management of natural and cultural values involves working together on country.
- Protection of the Park’s ecological, cultural and heritage values will be achieved by minimising the impacts of wildfire, weeds, erosion and feral animals.
- Management of cultural knowledge and sites is guided by Traditional Owners.
- The Burra Charter (1999) provides sound guidance for cultural heritage conservation.

The Joint Management Partners will look after the flora, fauna, landscapes and places of cultural importance using both traditional and scientific knowledge.

*“It’s not just in ceremony. It’s all the time we talk about it. Just driving from one place to another we talk about places we see, the dreamings. Older people are always talking Tjukurpa to younger ones.”*

**Looking after culture.** Under the laws of Tjukurpa, the Traditional Owners are responsible for country and are obliged to maintain and protect it. Tjukurpa requires Traditional Owners to respect the land and spirits that dwell within it by performing ceremonies on country and passing religious and ecological knowledge on to their descendants. Caring also entails visiting and monitoring the country and moving appropriately on it.

Many Traditional Owners live within the Park. They, and others living elsewhere regularly visit, camp and teach on the Park. Children practice their language, learn the names of places, where to go, how to behave on the country of their ancestors, continue to learn how to hunt and gather bush foods and are inducted gradually into the songs and rituals of Tjukurpa.





Traditional Owners gather seasonal plant foods, small game, medicines, ochre and wood and hunt kangaroos, emus and goannas on the Park. Hunting and gathering are important activities for maintaining connection to country and passing on knowledge. As one Traditional Owner says:

***“Everything is special; trees, animals, hunting and waterholes. We know we’re connected to country when we are hunting and collecting bush medicine, passing knowledge on through hunting, gathering and making tools.”***

To ensure that the country is properly cared for, Traditional Owners continue to hold ceremonies and attend meetings for spiritual and secular purposes relating to the area. Ceremonies are held regularly to ensure the transmission of geographical and spiritual knowledge to the next generation. Many significant and sacred sites within the Park remain relatively undisturbed and located in remote areas away from the public access areas. A large number of archaeological sites, over 170 recorded art sites and several historical sites bear testimony to thousands of years of Aboriginal occupation, adaptation and innovation.

***“Managing country means working together on country and managing natural and cultural values together”***  
**Senior Ranger**

**Looking after country.** The Park’s unique geology and water catchments support natural and ecological values of international conservation significance. Over the ages, water has worn deeply incised creeks throughout the main range, forming sheltered environments contributing to the survival of fragile plant and animal communities. After rain, as the creeks dry up many of the rock holes on top of the George Gill Range remain, and in the valley below, permanent spring-fed waterholes can be found. These water catchments are of high conservation and cultural value, having sustained countless generations. The geology and water catchments have created an abundance of life in Watarrka, the cool and shady conditions also creating excellent microhabitats for relict plant species. These sites are considered some of the most species-rich in Central Australia and are highly protected with minimal impact from people or feral animals.



Of the estimated 2000 plant species recorded in Central Australia, 691 species have been confirmed within the Park, including threatened and endemic species, giving Watarrka the status of Site of National Botanical Significance. Several plant species of special conservation status have been recorded and are provided in Appendix 1.

Watarrka National Park is home to four significant plant communities. These include:

- the sparse Chenopod shrubland communities on the low hills and plains west and north of the George Gill Range
- the sand dune communities associated with shallow rock and range country
- the clay plains - wide clay drainages and clay pans with distinct shrub and grass species
- Witchetty Bush on Silty sandstone with Black Gidgee and Spinifex

To date 20 native mammal species, 126 birds, 71 reptiles, 7 frogs and 109 taxa of invertebrates have been recorded in the Park. It is likely that continuing fauna surveys will see the Park confirmed as one of the richest areas for reptiles in the Australian arid zone. Many mammals now extinct in the southern part of the Northern Territory once occurred in this region. Traditional Owners have strong connections to many of these species through Tjukurpa. It is important to work towards safe-guarding the Park's threatened fauna including;

- Australian Bustard, *Ardeotis australis* listed as Near Threatened under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* (TPWCA)
- Slater's Skink, *Liopholis slateri*, listed as Endangered under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (EPBC) (Cth) and vulnerable under the TPWCA
- Black-footed Rock Wallaby, *Petrogale lateralis* listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC and Near Threatened under the TPWCA
- Princess Parrot, *Polytelis alexandrae*, listed as Vulnerable (EPBC & TPWCA)
- Southern Marsupial Mole, *Nortoryctes typhlops*, Land Snail, *Pillomena aemula*, Grey Falcon, *Falco hypoleucos* all listed as Vulnerable under the TPWCA

Burrowing Bettong, *Bettongia lesuer* and Greater Bilby, *Macrotis lagotis* are no longer known to exist in the Park. In 2000 - 2001, a large predator-proof enclosure was constructed in the Park and stocked with Rufous Hare-Wallaby, *Lagorchestes hirsutus*,

and Mala, listed as Endangered (EPBC) or Extinct in the Wild (TPWCA). With the future of this species being secured in other places the Watarrka Mala program may be discontinued during the term of this Plan.

In 2016 the Australian Government announced that Watarrka National Park would be assessed for inclusion on the National Heritage List.

**“We need to be working on and looking after the land – together.”**

**Protecting against threats.** There have been three major wildfire events in the past 30 years that may have been very damaging to the Park's biodiversity. Today, park staff work together with Traditional Owners, combining traditional and scientific fire management practices. Prescribed fire plays an important role and is used to keep eco-systems healthy, aid traditional hunting and protect the country from damaging hot wildfire, which may otherwise occur after big rainfall years.

Buffel Grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) also poses a major threat to the Park's biodiversity, mainly through increased fire frequency and intensity from greater fuel loads. The extent of infestation and ecological impact varies throughout the Park. The highest concentrations occur along watercourses and areas frequented by visitors, feral animals and stock.

Introduced animals recorded in the Park include camels, horses, cattle, yabbies, cats, foxes and rabbits. Large grazing animals were largely excluded from the Park in the 1980s with strategic fencing and the active removal of horses.

A Healthy Country Plan / Integrated Conservation Strategy (ICS) has been developed to describe the most important conservation values and how they will be protected and maintained by managing key threats. Involving Traditional Owners and applying traditional ecological knowledge is important to this Strategy and its implementation.

Systematic fauna survey and targeted monitoring is conducted in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. This monitoring aligns with the ICS and provides valuable data to inform more adaptive and effective management programs.

Consistent with the wishes of the Traditional Owners, exploration and mining within the park was officially prohibited in 2017.

## Objective and Strategies

**The Park's natural and cultural values are protected and Aboriginal knowledge and interests are incorporated into management programs.**

- The Partners will learn about and share Aboriginal knowledge so together they can continue looking after country using both traditional knowledge and science in our conservation programs.
- Sensitivity and respect will be given to the directions and decisions from Traditional Owners on cultural matters. Cultural knowledge shared will always belong to the Traditional Owners and will only be used as directed by them, consistent with Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Policy.
- The Healthy Country Plan / ICS will be reviewed every five years. Fire management will be given high priority with increased effort to follow high rainfall years when fuel loads increase.
- Systematic research, monitoring and reporting of the Park's biological resources is incorporated into the Healthy Country Plan / ICS.
- A Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) and program for the Park will be developed with advice and support from the CLC and Heritage branch. The Partners will work together to identify additional supporting resources, if required. The cultural heritage program will provide for "back to country" activities, cultural awareness programs and knowledge sharing opportunities for rangers and tourism operators and the management of archaeological and heritage places.
- A hunting and gathering policy will be developed by the partners, supporting traditional land use. The Policy will identify areas for hunting and firearm use, with the underlying goal of keeping country healthy and visitors safe.
- Sacred sites will be properly protected, supported by the CLC and Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) as required. The CLC will have primary responsibility for consulting Traditional Owners for proposed works.
- Protection of the Park's natural character and aesthetic values will be given high priority. Any development will be carefully sited and sustainably designed to be in harmony with the natural environment and significant sites, so as not to detract from the Park's outstanding landscape and scenic values.
- Soil and gravel extraction for soil conservation or other purposes will be subject to the approval of the Partners. Traditional Owner's right to extract ochre will continue to be upheld under the TPWCA
- The Partners will work with the local community and relevant stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach to land management across tenures and neighbouring properties. Cooperative natural resource management will be encouraged with community ranger groups and adjoining landowners, including the Angas Downs Indigenous Protected Area and Katiti - Petermann Indigenous Protected Area.











## THEME 3: VISITOR EXPERIENCES

*“We want visitors to know about our history, how our ancestors lived... our plants and animals, Aboriginal names and bush tucker. We want Aboriginal names for places too so people know this place is owned by Traditional Owners. People will go home happy inside when they learn our culture.”*

### Principles for Visitor Experiences:

- Delivery and development of rewarding and diverse visitor experiences will support our tourism industry.
- Visitor enjoyment of the park leads to further growth in visitor numbers and greater length of stay.
- The tourism industry must be involved in developing high quality experiences, that are responsive to changing visitor interests and expectations.
- Tourism can foster cultural awareness, sharing of traditional practices, establish joint ventures, generate income, create employment for the local community and support delivery of the Park's objectives.
- Facilities that well designed, sensitive to the natural and cultural environment and contribute towards an enjoyable, educational and safe visitor experience.
- Visitor safety is paramount. Traditional Owners welcome you to this special place and want to ensure you have safe and memorable experiences so that you can go home and share the story of Watarrka with your family and friends.
- Understanding visitors, their interests and activities helps good decision-making and can identify enterprise opportunities for Traditional Owners.

Watarrka is an exceptional landscape, rich with ancient rock shelters, fascinating geological structures and abundance of plant and animal life. As part of the Red Centre Way incorporating Uluru-Kata-Tjuta and the Western MacDonnell Ranges, self-drive visitors come to immerse themselves in the iconic outback and the incredible nature and culture of the region. Promotional campaigns have supported a steady increase in visitor numbers with about 250,000 people visiting in 2016, predominately from the domestic market (80%).

There are exciting opportunities through future visitor experience planning to work with the tourism industry to enhance existing experiences, improve access and infrastructure, create new activities and grow the Park's international profile to attract more overseas visitors.

**Why do visitors come to Watarrka?** Visitors are drawn to Watarrka for many reasons, but the beauty of Kings Canyon made famous in photographs and film, entices people to come and experience it for themselves. Experiences of Watarrka deliver on the Territory's tourism strengths of nature, fun, adventure and culture.

The six kilometre, four hour **Kings Canyon Rim Walk** is one of Central Australia's must-do experiences. This challenging walk rewards visitors with majestic views of the sandstone cliffs and great opportunities for photography and seeing wildlife. It includes the tranquil Garden of Eden Waterhole, a natural oasis for hikers to stop and rest. For cultural and safety reasons swimming here is prohibited.

The **Kings Creek Walk** is an easy two kilometre one hour walk along the ancient valley floor of the Canyon, which is a less strenuous, more intimate way to enjoy the Canyon. About one third of all visitors do this walk, which ends at an elevated platform that provides superb views up the sheer Canyon walls. It is recommended as a safe and comfortable alternative to the Rim Walk in hot weather, and for people with a lower level of physical fitness or mobility.

The **Kathleen Springs Walk** is one of the Park's spectacular gorges and rockholes with an easy 2.5 km walk leading from a quiet picnic area and with access to the eastern end of the Giles Track. The sealed path meanders through the gorge, ending in an elevated steel walkway overhanging clear spring-fed waters. Facilities here include sealed road access and parking, a shade shelter, picnic furniture, gas barbecues, drinking water and a pit toilet.

The 22 km **Giles Track** is an adventurous 1-2 day walk of moderate difficulty that follows the southern faces of the George Gill Range. For visitors wanting an immersive and remote experience, the walk crosses a plateau of sandstone before connecting to the Kings Canyon Rim Walk. This is the only overnight walking track in the Park and offers bush camping along most of its length.

**Sharing Culture.** The Traditional Owners welcome people to Watarrka and want to share their connection with, and knowledge of country with visitors. They want visitors to enjoy the Park, safely and with respect, to return home to their

families and share the Watarrka story. They want you to know that:

- This is Aboriginal land, it is our home and we are looking after this place together.
- You are welcome – we want you to enjoy this wonderful place.
- We all have a responsibility to respect each other and look after this country.
- This is a very important place for our culture, country and history.
- There's more to this place than just the Canyon – you can learn about our country and culture, and share your experience with your family and friends back home.
- There are plants and animals here that are not found anywhere else that are very special.
- We want you to feel comfortable learning about Aboriginal people and culture.
- We want you to be safe – this is your responsibility.

Many visitors seek authentic, engaging experiences with local Aboriginal people to learn about their lives, history and heritage, culture, lifestyle and art. Meeting and spending time with Traditional Owners fosters an appreciation of the living Aboriginal culture of Watarrka and encourages visitors to enjoy the Park with due respect.

Some Traditional Owners want to share their stories with visitors through tours, interpretative information on signs and cultural activities. This can be achieved through Joint Management and with direct involvement from the Traditional Owners living within the Park providing their own authentic cultural tourism experiences. The Joint Management Partners and the tourism industry need to work together in supporting Traditional Owners with developing sustainable enterprises. Joint ventures with existing tour companies are another positive way forward in strengthening relationships and progressing social returns for Traditional Owners.

**Understanding our visitors.** It is important that the Joint Management Partners stay abreast and are responsive to trends and opportunities in nature-based tourism and recreation. The global tourism market seeks a mix of active, adventurous fun and exciting, unique holidays. There is real demand for immersive, life-changing experiences including interactive, authentic cultural experiences with Traditional Owners on country.

Counting visitor numbers, monitoring visitor patterns and trends and measuring satisfaction is essential to inform sound planning of services, facilities and experiences.

Past visitor surveys have shown that most visitors are satisfied with facilities and experiences provided. They also indicate that visitors desire more contact with rangers and Aboriginal people.

**Quality Experiences.** Capital investment is also important to developing world-class tourism, complemented with high-quality services and infrastructure, interpretation and cultural experiences. Future visitor experience planning will identify needs and explore opportunities, while also ensuring benefits for the Traditional Owners and the Park. Future development potential includes:

- Walking, cycling, adventure. Improving and extending the Giles Track to include side-walks. A shared walking / cycling path will be constructed between Kings Canyon Resort and the Canyon. Other adventure, cycling and mountain biking experiences.
- A facility for sharing culture. Traditional Owners have been saying for many years, *'We need our culture at our own visitor centre. We want this to be a place where tourists can find out about our culture. We need that information for our young people too - something for them to look back on.'*
- Unique accommodation. Kings Canyon Resort, Kings Creek Station and Kings Canyon Wilderness Lodge currently provide overnight accommodation for visitors. New options include luxury boutique lodging, within or near the Park in which Traditional Owners provide services, including high-quality cultural experiences.

**Visitor safety is paramount.** Visitor safety concerns include heat stress and dehydration, injury and cliff-related incidents, vehicle and aircraft related accidents, and incidents due to wildfire and flash flooding. The most significant safety issue concerns walker preparedness for the Kings Canyon Walk and Giles Track. Working with the tourism industry, measures have been put in place to ensure ongoing safety messages for visitors during their stay. This includes a hot weather management strategy and tour guide induction program. Ongoing communication between tour operators, the tourism industry and the Joint Management Partners is vital. In 2017 a welcome shelter was constructed at the base of the Canyon (see back cover through which all visitors must pass to access the walks). The Shelter provides vital safety messages and presents a walker safety video.

*"You have a chance to learn about country and culture."*

## Objective and Strategies

**Manage and develop safe, sustainable and outstanding world-class experiences that connect visitors to Watarrka and its people.**

- Develop a Visitor Experience Development Plan (VEDP) reflecting the Park's role as an important regional tourist destination. The Plan will:
  - » Be developed with comprehensive consultation with the tourism industry.
  - » Explore opportunities to enhance existing experiences and develop new experiences, activities and facilities consistent with market trends and the expectations of contemporary visitors.
  - » Pay high regard to cultural and environmental sustainability.
  - » Encourage and support growth of Aboriginal tourism enterprise, including joint ventures supported by the tourism industry.
  - » Consider options for new accommodation and adventure activities such as new or extended walking tracks, night tours, cycling and mountain biking, rock-climbing, bush-camping and four-wheel driving.
  - » Outline innovative interpretation of the Park's values and immersive cultural experiences, including ideas for facilities.
  - » Engage the community and provide opportunities for ongoing feedback and adaptive management.
  - » Be reviewed every five years and as required to ensure currency with marketing trends and visitor satisfaction.
- Work with the tourism marketing arm of the NT Government and the tourism industry so that accurate and appropriate messaging is delivered that reflects the values of the Park and the wishes of Traditional Owners.
- Maintain the highest standards of visitor safety with ongoing monitoring, maintenance and risk assessment for park facilities and visitor management practices.
- Consider resourcing opportunities through existing tourism industry programs and initiatives to support the delivery of Park objectives.
- Develop a cultural awareness program for tour operators to encourage supportive relationships, Aboriginal knowledge sharing, and sharing of appropriate cultural stories with visitors.



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# APPENDIX 1

## Threatened flora

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	CONSERVATION STATUS	
		“EPBC Act” Cwlth*1	“TPWAC” *2
<i>Macrozamia macdonnellii</i>	MacDonnell Ranger Cycad	VU	NT
<i>Santalum acuminatum</i>	Santalum, Quandong, Native Peach, Sweet Quandong		VU
<i>Amperea spicata</i>	George Gill Range Cliff-bush	-	VU
<i>Orianthera centralis</i>	Logania	-	NT
<i>Melaleuca faucicola</i>	Desert Bottlebrush	-	NT
<i>Ophioglossum lusitanicum</i>	Austral Adders Tongue	-	NT
<i>Poranthera triandra</i>	Three-petal Poranthera	-	NT
<i>Grevillea pterosperma</i>	Desert Grevillea, Desert Spider Flower	-	NT
<i>Hakea grammatophylla</i>	Hakea	-	NT
<i>Stenanthemum petraeum</i>	-	-	NT
<i>Xanthorrhoea thorntonii</i>	Xanthorrhoea, Desert Grass Tree, Yacka	-	NT
<i>Datura leichhardtii</i> subsp. <i>leichhardtii</i>	Native Thornapple	-	NT
<i>Austrostipa centralis</i>	Austrostipa	-	NT
<i>Eragrostis sterilis</i>	Eragrostis, Lovegrass	-	NT
<i>Eragrostis subtilis</i>	-	-	NT
<i>Persicaria decipiens</i>	Slender Knotweed	-	NT
<i>Sedopsis filsonii</i>	Pink Rock-wort	-	NT
<i>Swainsona colutoides</i>	Bladder Swainsona	-	NT
<i>Goodenia glandulosa</i>	Goodenia	-	NT
<i>Goodenia havilandii</i>	-	-	NT
<i>Glischrocaryon aureum</i> var. <i>angustifolium</i>	Yellow Popflower	-	NT
<i>Juncus continuus</i>	Juncus	-	NT
<i>Acacia grasbyi</i>	-	-	NT
<i>Doodia caudata</i>	Doodia, Small Rasp Fern	-	NT
<i>Cuphonotus andraeanus</i>	Downy Mother-of-Misery	-	NT
<i>Histiopteris incisa</i>	Bats Wing Fern, Oak Fern	-	NT

<i>Euphorbia sarcostemmoides</i>	False Caustic Bush, Climbing Caustic	-	NT
<i>Bulbostylis pyriformis</i>	-	-	NT
<i>Sclerolaena parallelicuspis</i>	Western Copper Burr	-	NT
<i>Hydrocotyle sp. Watarrka</i>	Wild Parsley	-	NT
<i>Chthonocephalus pseudevax</i>	Ground-heads	-	NT
<i>Cratystylis centralis</i>	Bluebush Daisy, Blue Daisy-bush	-	NT
<i>Mirbelia ramulosa</i>	Mirbelia	-	NT

As at July 2017 there are 680 Flora species listed in Watarrka National Park. For a complete list refer to NR Maps: visit [nrmaps.nt.gov.au](http://nrmaps.nt.gov.au)

## APPENDIX 2

### Threatened fauna

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	CONSERVATION STATUS	
		“EPBC Act” Cwlth*1	“TPWCA” *2
* <i>Bettongia lesueur</i>	Burrowing Bettong	EX	EX
<i>Sinumelon bednalli</i>	Bednall’s Land Snail	-	CR
<i>Liopholis slateri</i>	Slater’s Skink	EN	VU
<i>Lagorchestes hirsutus</i>	Mala or Rufous Hare-Wallaby	EN	EW
* <i>Macrotis lagotis</i>	Greater Bilby	VU	VU
<i>Petrogale lateralis</i>	Black-footed Rock-wallaby	VU	NT
<i>Polytelis alexandrae</i>	Princess Parrot	VU	VU
<i>Pillomena aemula</i>	Snail	-	VU
<i>Falco hypoleucos</i>	Grey Falcon	-	VU
<i>Notoryctes typhlops</i>	Southern Marsupial Mole	-	VU

\*Species not known on park anymore.

July 2017 there are 256 listed fauna species in Watarrka National Park. For the complete list refer to NR Maps: visit [nrmaps.nt.gov.au](http://nrmaps.nt.gov.au)

\*1 *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* (Commonwealth)

EN – Endangered

VU – Vulnerable

CR – Critically Endangered

\*2 *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act* (Northern Territory)

VU – Vulnerable

EX – Extinct

NT – Near Threatened









[WWW.DTC.NT.GOV.AU](http://WWW.DTC.NT.GOV.AU)



## **WOMEN IN SPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

The Australian Sports Commission set up a Women in Sport Working Group in 2015, which has identified four priority areas to improve women's and girls' participation in sport and active recreation:

- 1) Facilitating the participation of all women and girls in sport and active recreation at all levels
- 2) Encouraging strong gender balanced leadership in sport and recreation to enable real change
- 3) Promoting women's and girls' involvement in sport and active recreation at all levels, and
- 4) Encouraging safe, comfortable and culturally appropriate sport and active recreation places and spaces.

The Northern Territory Government is strongly supportive of, and committed to working on a national approach to gender equality in sport and recreation. The NT Government intends to retain flexibility in meeting the needs of their communities and respond to local priorities while working towards an agreed common goal.

In March 2017, the Northern Territory Minister for Tourism and Culture, the Hon Lauren Moss, MLA announced the formation of a Women in Sport Advisory Committee to provide advice and information from the grassroots of Northern Territory sport surrounding women in sport.

The intention of the Women in Sport Advisory Committee is to provide a community voice for those who have previously participated or currently participate in sport in the NT as a player, coach, official or volunteer. Information and suggestions from the Women in Sport Advisory Committee will be forwarded to the Minister for Tourism and Culture for consideration and further discussion.

#### **2. PURPOSE**

The Women in Sport Advisory Committee is being established to provide strategic and practical advice to inform the Department of Tourism and Culture towards improving the delivery, recognition, promotion and development of participation and leadership opportunities for women in sport in the NT.

The Women in Sport Advisory Committee will:

- Serve to represent the sporting community at the grass roots level, to 'take the pulse' of community sentiment in women's participation in sport in the NT
- Help to raise the profile of NT women in sport and explore the issue of gender equality in sport and recreation in the NT
- Provide advice and information and to be an additional voice to monitor whether the policies and strategies of the Department are meeting community need, and where changes are necessary



- Advise the Minister for Tourism and Culture on practical actions for the sport and active recreation sector to enhance participation by women and girls and to increase their engagement in leadership and governance roles in sport

### **3. FUNCTION**

The Women in Sport Advisory Committee will provide input, ideas and advice on emergent and existing issues affecting the growth of women's participation, leadership and ability to provide influence in sport in the Northern Territory.

The Women in Sport Advisory Committee is to discuss and put forward suggestions around:

- What is going well for women in sport;
- What the current challenges are; and
- Where the Department should target initiatives and/or investment for improvement

The aim of the Women in Sport Advisory Committee is to provide recommendations and actions that are bold and practical, and will deliver changes in thinking, behaviour and the way sport and recreation operate in a one to five year time frame.

### **4. MEMBERSHIP**

The Women in Sport Advisory Committee is to have members with a combination of any of the following knowledge/skills:

- Sport in the Northern Territory and/or Nationally
- The sport and recreation landscape in Northern Territory (grass roots to elite)
- Club Management and Operations
- Volunteer Management
- Sport and/or Business Management

The Women in Sport Advisory Committee is made up of 10 members in total. Members will be sourced through an Expression of Interest process in September-October 2017, with applications assessed by the Department.

In finalising membership, consideration will be given to ensuring a balance of a wide spectrum of sports being represented, as well as a range of experiences and skills.

The Minister for Tourism and Culture will endorse and officially appoint the final membership of the Women in Sport Advisory Committee.

These members will be appointed in November 2017 to commence duties in December 2017. The duration of the appointment will initially be for one (1) year.

Casual vacancies occurring in the membership of the Women in Sport Advisory Committee will be filled from individuals identified by the Department of Tourism and Culture, and current members must be ratified by the Minister for Tourism and Culture.

Other members may be invited with the approval of the Minister for Tourism and Culture to assist with particular expertise in a subject matter under discussion.

## **5. ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND CULTURE**

The role of the Department of Tourism and Culture will be in performing the role of secretariat of the Women in Sport Advisory Committee. Their responsibilities shall include:

- Prepare agendas, scheduling meetings and notify members
- Circulate reports, supporting information prior to each meeting
- The preparation of any committee meeting documentation
- Take notes or minutes of the meeting
- Facilitate communications and engagement with the sector.

## **6. MEETINGS**

Meetings will be held not less than four (4) times, and not more than six (6) times each calendar year, unless otherwise agreed by the Women in Sport Advisory Committee membership.

The first meeting of the group will be convened by December 2017, with meeting dates for 2018 to be set at this first meeting.

A minimum of five (5) members will be required to make quorum.

## **7. REPORTING**

The outcomes of the Women in Sport Advisory Committee's discussions are to be reported to and considered by the Department of Tourism and Culture, for further action and dissemination to the Minister for Tourism and Culture as appropriate.

## **8. ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Women in Sport Advisory Committee is a non-statutory body. The role and functions of the Women in Sport Advisory Committee are advisory in nature. It is not a decision-making forum and does not consider issues or outcomes of operational matters.

## **9. REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Department of Tourism and Culture will periodically consult with members about the adequacy of these Terms of Reference and satisfaction with the Women in Sport Advisory Committee – its membership and its impact.



# Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park

## Joint Management Plan

February 2016



Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory

Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park Joint Management Plan  
Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory  
PO Box 1120  
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871

Published by the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory  
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## Executive Summary

### The Park and its values

Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park protects spectacular examples of Aboriginal rock art in central Australia, and is found right on the doorstep of Alice Springs. From Heavitree Gap, stretching 15 kilometres east, the Park presents a quintessential central Australian landscape, where visitors can walk along the large river beds and be surrounded by glowing red, ancient rock formations contrasting against iridescent blue skies.

The Park consists of three overlapping sacred sites representing the caterpillar creation story, one of the most significant Aboriginal creation stories for the Alice Springs area. The rock art found in both Emily and Jessie Gaps depicts this caterpillar creation story. The *ayepe arenye* caterpillar is one of three important caterpillar species and it is from here that the Park's name 'Yeperenye' is derived and from which stories are shared. Through the sharing of these stories, visitors have an opportunity to connect with Aboriginal people and their culture.

### Purpose of the Park

Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park will continue to be managed for its cultural, ecological and scenic values. Special importance will be placed on protecting the exceptional rock art found within Emily and Jessie Gaps. These sites are of immense importance to the Arrernte Traditional Owners and provide visitors with opportunities to learn about the cultural landscape of the region. The Park provides an opportunity for locals and visitors alike to enjoy the low-key natural and scenic setting so close to Alice Springs. The Joint Management Partners also recognise the potential social and economic benefits of commercial tourism.

The Park protects the habitat of two species of land snail found nowhere else, and a suite of plants valued by Arrernte Traditional Owners for their food and medicinal properties.

### Setting the management direction

This is the first Joint Management Plan for Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park. The joint management partners are the Traditional Owners of the land and the Parks and Wildlife Commission, representing the Northern Territory Government. Through joint management, the partners will develop a strong partnership that serves the interests of the Traditional Owners, the Park and the wider community.

As set out in the management directions in this Plan, the joint management partners will work together to:

- provide a safe and enjoyable low-key experience for visitors that will enhance their appreciation of the Park's cultural significance;
- protect the rock art and manage the critical habitat for the land snail and the vegetation of cultural significance; and
- engage the broader community in the Park's management.



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**Vision for the Park:** Joint management partners working together with the community to ensure the Park's values are enjoyed by visitors, maintained for Traditional Owners and protected for future generations.

## 1. The Values of the Park and its Purpose

Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park is an ideal destination for visitors and locals looking for recreational and cultural attractions within close proximity to Alice Springs and is an ideal short stop for visitors *en route* to other Parks within the East MacDonnell Range.

The Park forms a natural boundary for the southern suburbs of Alice Springs. Starting at Heavitree Gap, the Park extends over fifteen kilometres east along the Heavitree Range, incorporating the significant cultural sites of Ntaripe, Anthwerrke and Atherrke, commonly known as Heavitree, Emily and Jessie Gaps respectively. The Park provides the natural setting and tranquil scenery that visitors to the MacDonnell Ranges highly regard.

While a relatively small Park of approximately 1 200 hectares, Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park has significant **cultural heritage values**. The Park protects an integral part of the Central Arrernte peoples' caterpillar creation story, from which the name of the Park is derived. Yeperenye (also spelled ayepe-arenye) is one of three types of caterpillars associated with these creation stories. Yeperenye continues to be a vital part of the Central Arrernte traditional law and culture.

The walls of the gaps are decorated with impressive rock art, intimately associated with the caterpillar storylines. These **rock art paintings** are among the most spectacular examples of accessible Aboriginal rock art in central Australia and are of major anthropological value. The rock art is spiritually significant for the Arrernte people and the stories associated with it are sacred. The rock art provides visitors with an excellent opportunity to connect with Aboriginal culture in close proximity to Alice Springs.

While its contribution to biodiversity conservation is relatively minor, the Park's natural and scenic setting is of considerable value to visitors. It contains a suite of plants, including several large figs, valued by Arrernte Traditional Owners for food and other cultural uses and provides critical habitat for two land snail species found only in the Park.

## 1.2 The Plan

This is the first Joint Management Plan for Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park. It was prepared in accordance with the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (TPWC Act)*, the Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park Lease and two Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) registered with the National Native Title Tribunal pursuant to the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)*.

This plan sets objectives and directions for the management and development of the Park over the life of this plan. It provides the primary framework against which management performance will be measured and will remain in effect until amended or replaced by a new plan.

## 1.3 Reservation status

The Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park has a complex history of reservation dating back to its original declaration as a reserve (Emily and Jessie Gaps Scenic Reserve) in 1965 under the National Parks and Gardens Ordinance 1959 (NT).

In 1978, the Reserve was declared as a Park under section 12 of the TPWC Act and in 1979 the Park's name was changed to Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park. In 2002, the area known as the Heavitree Range extension (formerly Lot 9238, Town of Alice Springs) was also declared to be a Park under the TPWC Act.

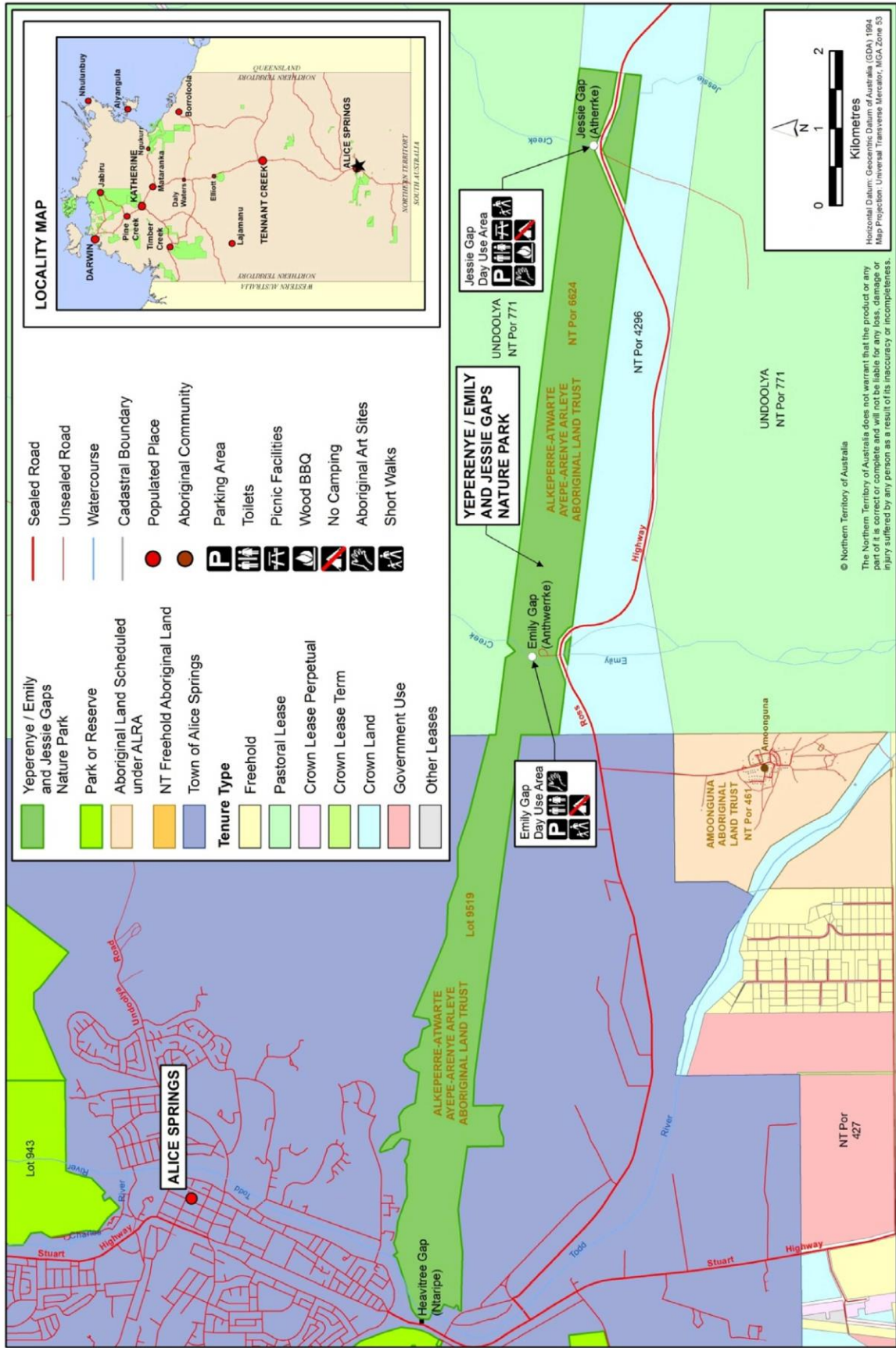
In 2004, the Park (including the Heavitree Range extension) was included in Schedule 1 of the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act (NT)* for the purposes of facilitating the transfer of the land title to an Aboriginal Land Trust on behalf of the Traditional Owners. The Park was then resurveyed into four portions; NT Portion 6624, Lot 9519, Lot 9520 and 9521 Town of Alice Springs.

NT Portion 6624 and Lot 9519 were scheduled under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (ALRA)* for the grant of title to the Alkeperre-atwarte Ayepe-arenye Arleye Aboriginal Land Trust. To facilitate the title transfer, on 18 November 2009, all areas previously declared as part of the Park were revoked and redeclared under s24(2) of the TPWC Act to cover NT Portion 6624 and Lots 9519, 9520 and 9521 (Town of Alice Springs).

On 25 November 2009, those parts of the Park comprising NT Portion 6624 and Lot 9519 were granted to Alkeperre-atwarte Ayepe-arenye Arleye Aboriginal Land Trust and were then leased to the Northern Territory for 99 years, to be managed jointly as a Nature Park. Lots 9520 and 9521 form part of the Park (subject to this joint management plan) but were not included as part of the ALRA grant. The Lots remain Vacant Crown Land and electricity supply easements in favour of the Power and Water Corporation exist over these areas.

Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park was named under section 12(2) of the TPWC Act on the 3 October 2014. Yeperenye, pronounced YEP-AREN-YA, is the traditional name for the area and acknowledges the traditional owners ongoing cultural connection with the place. Upon widespread and common use of the name, the reserve will become known as Yeperenye Nature Park.

Map 1 Location of Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park







**Joint management** is about working together to achieve shared goals and aspirations, including richer visitor experiences, protecting natural and cultural values and creating opportunities for Traditional Owners.

## 2. Joint Management

Joint management provides opportunities to make better management decisions through a shared responsibility. Joint management partners agree to recognise and value Aboriginal culture, knowledge and decision making, and to utilise the combined land management skills and expertise of both joint management partners. This in turn provides opportunities for visitor experiences, land management and for Traditional Owners. The success of joint management relies on a meaningful partnership between Parks and Wildlife Commission staff and the Traditional Owners. The success will be measured against the achievements of the objectives in this Plan and the satisfaction of the community and the joint management partners.

### 2.1 Joint management partners

The joint management partners for Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park are the Northern Territory of Australia (Territory) and the Traditional Aboriginal Owners (Traditional Owners) of the Park. The Territory is represented by the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory, which carries out the Territory's joint management obligations. For the purposes of this Joint Management Plan, references to the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory as a joint management partner should be read as including a reference to the Territory.

The Central Land Council (CLC) has an important role in assisting with joint management of the Park. Under the TPWC Act the CLC's role includes representing and protecting the interests of the Traditional Owners in relation to the Park's management.

#### 2.1.1 Traditional Owners

The Traditional Owners of the Park identify themselves as Central Arrernte people and belonging to the land through a system of laws and customs that has governed their ideas and practices from time immemorial.

Arrernte peoples' interests in land derive from the Altyerre (the creation time) and are articulated through the stories and song lines of the ancestors as they interacted with the land. These ancestors' travels, actions and encounters have been handed down through the generations. The details in these stories guide how Aboriginal people live their lives and how they relate to each other and their land.



For the Alice Springs area, some of the most significant creative ancestors were caterpillars who travelled from many directions and converged on Anthwerrke (Emily Gap) which is the *apmere akwetethe* (everlasting home) of the caterpillar ancestors.

Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park is primarily regarded as belonging to the Antulye estate group, but responsibilities are shared with the Mpartnwe estate group for the caterpillar creation stories north of the Range, as they interact with the caterpillar creation stories south of the Range.

Not all Arrernte people are Traditional Owners of the Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park. In Arrernte, '*apmere*' is the term used to refer to where a person is originally from, as well as to refer to a person's camp or home; the suffix – *arenye* following a place name also denotes belonging to that place, for example *Mparntwarenye*, meaning 'belonging to *Mparntwe*'. Membership to a particular landholding group (often referred to as 'estates') is primarily through descent. Individuals may be identified as *apmereke-artweye* ("bosses" in relation to a particular place – *ampere*, this status is usually inherited through that person's father and father's father. The term *kwertengerle* ("managers") similarly denotes inherited connection to country, but through matrification (a person's mother's father, mother's mother or father's mother) and with different responsibilities. Responsibility for country is shared in the partnership between *apmereke-artweye* and *kwertengerle*. However, there are other ways by which individuals can be incorporated within landholding groups that are not descent based, namely: birthplace/conception site connections; particular creation story connections; long term residence and others. The degree to which such "secondary" rights and interests are realised depends on negotiation with members of the landholding group (*apmereke-artweye* and *kwertengerle*). Recognition by other members of the group is a key factor determining inclusion with the group. This is reflected in Olney J's Determination of Native Title in "*Hayes v Northern Territory (1999) FCA 1248*":

1. Native title exists in relation to the land and waters more particularly described in the Schedule hereto (the determination area, including the Heavitree Range Extension).
2. The persons who hold the common or group rights comprising the native title (the common law holders) are those Aboriginals who are descended from the original Arrernte inhabitants of the *Mpartnwe*, *Antulye* and *Irlpme* estates who are recognised by the respective *apmereke-artweye* and *kwertengerle* of those estates under the traditional laws acknowledged and the traditional customs observed by them as having communal, group or individual rights and interests in relation to such estates.

Here Artepe Aboriginal Corporation is the Prescribed Body Corporate (established in 2002) currently acting as trustee for the native title holders of Alice Springs; it is this organisation that is party to the Indigenous Land Use Agreement with the Northern Territory and the CLC for the joint management of the Heavitree Range Extension (Lot 9519).

These descriptions are technical legal distinctions that derive from the two different types of land tenure recognised within one joint management plan. Having made that distinction, the term 'Traditional Owners' will be used herein to include both traditional Aboriginal owners and native title holders.

Traditional Owners welcome the opportunity to work together with the Parks and Wildlife Commission as partners jointly managing Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park into the future.

### 2.1.2 The Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory

The Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory is dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural values of parks and reserves, while providing high-quality nature-based tourism and recreation opportunities for visitors. The Parks and Wildlife Commission is committed to engaging the public and working with the interests of the community. Parks and Wildlife Commission is committed to seeing that the joint management partnership grows, becomes truly equitable and has benefits for the wider community.

## 2.2 Planning and decision making

Making sure that joint management partners have a clear structure and process for making decisions is essential for good joint management. The joint management partners have organised themselves and put rules in place to realise their shared vision.

The joint management partners acknowledge that their partnership is new and that it will take time to build a strong working relationship. They recognise the need for institutional support and capacity building to develop effective governance. Subsequently the partners agree that having a flexible approach to decision making is important, and consider the following principles for working together to be vital:

- Both partners are responsible for making joint management work and need to be committed to that objective.
- A mutual understanding of, and respect for, country, law, culture and Indigenous decision-making principles are fundamental to good joint management.
- Good decisions can only be made when both partners have a clear process and guidelines, good information and enough time to consider decisions properly.
- Listening to each other and communicating honestly are essential.

Clear **roles and responsibilities** are essential for joint management and each of the partners have responsibilities for looking after the Park in accordance with traditional Aboriginal laws and laws applicable in the Northern Territory.

The **joint management partners** are together accountable for the management of the Park, and to monitor and review this management against the objectives and management directions in this plan. It is the responsibility of the joint management partners to consider other proposals not specified in this plan.

**Parks and Wildlife Commission** is responsible for the implementation of the day-to-day management of the Park as outlined in this plan and is required to finance and resource the Park's ongoing management. Parks and Wildlife Commission will report progress annually to the joint management partners, and will liaise with stakeholders and neighbours. Parks and Wildlife Commission is responsible for monitoring management effectiveness and for adjusting management according to new information improved procedures, new technology and new threats or issues.

**Traditional Owners** are responsible to the land, law and culture. They retain special responsibilities for decision making and oversee cultural protocols for sacred sites. They are responsible for country and managing and transferring traditional knowledge. Some individuals have specific responsibilities and must be involved in matters which affect sacred sites.

The **Central Land Council** has a statutory responsibility for consulting with and protecting the interests of Traditional Owners of the Park and to assist with monitoring joint management processes.

## 2.3 Indigenous training, employment and enterprise development

One of the aims of joint management is to identify and promote opportunities for employment and business for Aboriginal people. Traditional Owners emphasise how important training and employment is for their families and acknowledge their responsibility to support young people. In doing so, they have identified numerous opportunities for greater involvement in park management. These include but are not limited to the flexible employment program, contracting work, guided tours, and tourism business ventures.

Flexible project based employment, has been and will continue to be provided to Aboriginal people. It provides many benefits including work experience, skills exchange and accredited training, and helps build positive working relationships between Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Commission. The Alice Springs Telegraph Station hosts ranger, trainee and apprenticeship positions and Traditional Owners are encouraged to apply for any such positions.

Just as Traditional Owners emphasise the importance of training and employment for their families, they recognise the limited opportunities that this Park presents for employment. For that reason, joint management partners will, where possible, explore opportunities for employment for Traditional Owners across the wider district.

### Objectives of Joint Management

- An equitable partnership with effective governance that makes well-informed management decisions; and
- An involved community that supports joint management.

### Management Directions

**2.1 Joint management committee:** A committee comprising Parks and Wildlife Commission, Traditional Owner and Native Title representatives is accountable for the management of the Park. The committee will monitor and review the objectives and management directions in this Plan to assist the partners meet their obligations set out in the Park Lease, the ILUA and the TPWC Act. The committee may delegate responsibilities and activities to working groups. This structure will remain flexible and will be reviewed at annual planning meetings.

**2.2 Annual planning meetings:** The committee will meet at least once a year on country. The meetings will be open to all Traditional Owners to attend. Before the meeting commences, Traditional Owners will decide if the right people are present to make decisions and who, from a pool of proxies, will stand in for absent members. Decisions will be made by consensus. The purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Share information between Parks and Wildlife Commission and the Traditional Owners;
- Review park operations and any working group activity;
- Plan works for the following year and identify employment opportunities;
- Develop, review and provide advice regarding policies and procedures;
- Review permit applications;
- Review progress against management directions in this plan; and

- Review community concerns (if any) and the satisfaction of the partners with joint management processes.

**2.3 Special meetings:** Additional meetings of the joint management committee may be arranged from time to time. Management issues that require urgent attention may be referred by Parks and Wildlife Commission to CLC for consultation with the committee or the wider Traditional Owner group.

**2.4 Working groups:** Working groups may be formed to undertake planning or projects as delegated by the committee. The composition of groups will depend on the matters being addressed and may include Traditional Owners, NT Government staff, and external experts or stakeholders as appropriate.

**2.5 Information exchange:** Parks and Wildlife Commission will maintain regular formal and informal contact and engagement with Traditional Owners throughout the year. Parks and Wildlife Commission will provide relevant information to the joint management committee in good time to enable informed decisions to be made. The committee members will fairly represent and regularly communicate with the broader Traditional Owner groups on park management matters. Here Artepe Aboriginal Corporation, the community and stakeholders will be kept informed about significant issues and proposed developments.

**2.6 Resourcing and routine operations:** Parks and Wildlife Commission will finance and resource the Park's ongoing management including administrative functions, staff, infrastructure and services taking into account the funding available to the Commission and the priorities determined across the NT. Parks and Wildlife Commission will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Park as outlined in this plan and may be required to make decisions related to these operations without consultation with the joint management partners. These may include, for example, servicing facilities, visitor monitoring and emergency response.

**2.7 Supporting and building an effective partnership:** Priorities for training and capacity building will be identified by the joint management partners, giving consideration to governance and cross-cultural competencies.

**2.8 Indigenous training, employment and enterprise development:** Training and employment opportunities, including direct and flexible employment, contracts and enterprise will be actively pursued by the partners. Parks and Wildlife Commission will continue to provide opportunities for work experience, training, casual work and direct employment of Aboriginal people on the Park or at the district level where practicable.

Aboriginal training and employment will remain a standing item at Annual Planning Meetings.

- The partners may seek assistance from the private sector and agencies such as the CLC, Tourism NT and Tourism Central Australia to explore opportunities for enterprise development and cultural interpretation programs (such as commercial on-site guided tours).
- Preferences will be given to Traditional Owners of the Park participating in any commercial activities conducted under the lease subject to any law in force in the Territory. Contractors providing training and employment to local Aboriginal people will be preferred.



**Sacred Sites** are associated with caterpillar stories from the creation period (the *Altyerre*).

## 3. Providing for People on the Park

### 3.1 Visitors

Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park is an ideal destination for visitors looking for recreational and cultural attractions within close proximity to Alice Springs. Although small in size, the Park receives an estimated 30,000 – 50,000 visitors each year. The Park provides a low-key bush experience and an opportunity to view some of the most visually impressive rock art in central Australia, making it an ideal short stop for visitors en route to other parks within the East MacDonnell Range.

Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park is also frequented by local residents of Alice Springs. The local community enjoys the Park for short visits which may include picnicking, photography, bird watching, walking and cycling. Camping is not permitted.

#### 3.1.1 Recreation activities

The joint management partners would like visitors and the local community to enjoy the Park, its natural surrounds and the recreational opportunities that it provides. The joint management partners also want to make visitors aware that the entire park is a sacred site and has significant cultural values to the Traditional Owners. The Traditional Owners ask visitors to respect Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park and to follow any guidelines provided by the joint management partners. The partners want visitors to enjoy the Park in a safe manner and understand the risks that any recreation activity may present.

#### Local day use

Day use activities, such as viewing the impressive rock art, cultural interpretation, nature appreciation and picnics are encouraged on the Park at both Emily and Jessie Gaps (Map 1). Picnic tables and chairs, interpretive signs, toilets and walking tracks are provided at both Emily and Jessie Gaps. Fire pits are provided at Jessie Gap.

#### Bushwalking

Access to the two key sites of visitor interest is via short walking tracks from the car parks into the Gaps to view the rock art. There are opportunities to significantly improve walking and bushwalking



options for visitors to the East MacDonnell Ranges by creating additional walking tracks.

Careful consultation and planning will be required to ensure any walking tracks do not impact on sacred sites. The following opportunities will be considered by joint management partners during the life of this plan:

- Public tracks on the north and south boundaries of the Park adjacent to residential housing. This will provide opportunities to enjoy the Park using authorised access routes and limiting the impact they may otherwise have on sacred sites with the current informal use. Such tracks may facilitate shared use, including bicycle / mountain bikes.
- Walking tracks linking the Gaps. In line with the Larapinta Trail in the West MacDonnell Ranges, a walking track of this kind would create an opportunity to link the East and West MacDonnell Ranges. Such a walk may require additional infrastructure including tracks, directional and interpretive signage.

### **Swimming**

Swimming is allowed at both Emily and Jessie Gaps, but not encouraged or promoted. Water is rarely present for very long and is either too fast flowing for swimming or in small, shallow pools unsuitable for swimming.

### **Rock climbing and abseiling**

Rock climbing and abseiling has been occurring informally on the Park for decades. The joint management planning process has provided Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife Commission and user groups an opportunity to carefully consider the safety, cultural and environmental concerns about rock climbing in the Park. The partners are united in their wish for visitors to enjoy the Park, while maintaining safety and limiting any damage to the Park's natural and cultural values.

Rock climbing and abseiling are allowed to occur on Park, within designated areas. The joint management partners would like visitors to consider that the Park is a sacred site and holds cultural significance. For these reasons, rock climbing will be prohibited inside the Heavitree, Emily and Jessie Gaps, and on the entire north face of the range.

Rock climbing and abseiling are risky activities. The quartzite and sandstone rock is fragile and susceptible to erosion and breaking off. Climbers will be advised to take care whilst climbing and accessing the routes so as to avoid damaging the fragile and sacred environment.

The joint management partners will make visitors aware of rock climbing restrictions, risks and management precautions through appropriate signs and communications to users. The joint management partners will consider making formal agreements with known user groups.

The joint management partners give no warranties regarding the safety of the area and any climbers or abseilers undertaking these activities will do so entirely at their sole risk (in all respects). The joint management partners will not be responsible for the maintenance of any identified climbing walls, nor for any descriptions of climbing routes identified in any books, magazines or on the internet.

### **Managing anti-social behaviour**

Alcohol-based anti-social behaviour has been a problem on the Park from time to time, especially at Emily Gap. Commonwealth legislation prohibits alcohol within the Park. Should this prohibition be lifted at any time the Territory Government will, in accordance with the lease, have regard to the views of the joint management partners before exercising any powers over alcohol consumption on the Park.

### 3.1.2 Information and interpretation

Interpretation enhances visitor enjoyment and appreciation of the cultural heritage of the Park. Traditional Owners have been involved with the interpretation of the Park for many years before formal joint management and want to continue to interpret the cultural and spiritual significance of the Park to Parks and Wildlife Commission staff, tour operators and visitors through appropriate media. Together the partners will promote an understanding and respect for the traditions, languages, cultures, customs and skills of Traditional Owners.

Traditional Owners maintain strong cultural associations with the rock art. They request that photographs are not taken of the rock art in respect for their cultural beliefs. Further, Traditional Owners request that signs inform visitors that Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men should not view the rock art.

## 3.2 Aboriginal use

Traditional Owners regularly visit Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park to look after their country, to teach their children cultural and ecological knowledge related to the site, to gather bush tucker or for quiet time. Restricted ceremonies are sometimes held on important sites within the Park. The Central Arrernte people continue to maintain a strong connection to their country through intimate knowledge of their land and upholding cultural laws associated with it.

Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park has three overlapping registered sacred sites centred around the Gaps themselves. Each of the sites is related to caterpillar creation stories, the Altyerre. For the Alice Springs area, the most significant creative ancestors were caterpillars who travelled from many directions and converged on Anthwerrke (Emily Gap). There are three types of caterpillars associated with the creation stories north and south of the Range. Ayepe-arenye (a green and brightly striped caterpillar that feeds on Tar Vine); Utnerrengatye (a brightly coloured caterpillar that feeds on Emu bush); and Ntyarlke (a large green elephant grub that also feeds on Tar Vine). Irlperenye (Green Beetle, sometimes called 'stink beetle') interacts with these caterpillars at Ntaripe (Heavitree Gap) and a number of sacred sites south of the Range. Arleye (Emu) is the principal creation story associated with Jessie Gap and in particular, the large white sand dune just outside the eastern boundary of the Park.

The Traditional Owners have substantial knowledge of the Park's natural and cultural values and their inclusion and perspectives have and will continue to bring changes in the way the Park is managed. The need to transfer knowledge and practices from old to young people is important to Traditional Owners.

Traditional Owners are keen to share their knowledge with park staff, tour operators and visitors. Together the partners can promote an understanding and respect for the traditions, languages, cultures, customs and skills of Traditional Owners. To reflect and promote their continuing living connection with the country, the Traditional Owners seek to re-name the Park, Yeperenye, to recognise one of the significant caterpillar creation stories associated with the range.

## 3.3 Neighbours

Neighbours to the Park include suburban residential housing, rural lots, commercial tourist accommodation and public open spaces. The rural neighbours include expansive cattle stations. Matters of mutual concern include fencing, boundary access, control of stock and feral animals, weed control, fire management and to some extent, visitor access and safety. Working with neighbours, local community and key stakeholders for mutual benefit both manages risk and expands the positive influence of the Park beyond its immediate boundary.

Residential development areas include Mt Johns Valley and Undoolya. With development already underway, Mt Johns Valley will contain low and medium density housing. Undoolya is unlikely to be developed in the life of this Plan. With no buffer between the northern park boundary and the existing and future housing developments, this increasing urban development is a concern for joint management partners. Of particular concern is the unauthorised use and development from existing residential housing directly onto Park land, including the extension of residential rear fences and other infrastructure. Such encroachment is restricting effective fire management activities, and increasing the potential impact on cultural sites within the Park.

Opportunities for shared use tracks on both the north and south of the range at the western end may assist in formalising any access to the Park by neighbouring residents (more detail described in 3.1.1). Joint management partners will give consideration to this and consult with residential neighbours in relation to Park access and boundary management.

#### **Objectives for Providing for People on the Park**

- Visitors are provided with opportunities to enjoy the Park in a safe and natural environment;
- Traditional owners are able to fulfil their cultural responsibilities; and
- Benefits to neighbours and the wider community are maximised.

#### **Management Directions**

##### **3.1 Recreation activities:**

- Joint management partners will consider additional walking and shared use tracks in the Park.
- Rock climbing and abseiling may occur on the south face of the range. Rock climbing will be strictly prohibited in Heavitree, Emily or Jessie Gaps and on the north face of the range. It is illegal to install any permanent anchors into the rock faces. Climbers will climb or abseil in the Park at their own risk. Formal agreements or indemnities may be sought from known user groups. Signs will be erected advising visitors that rock climbing is prohibited within the Gaps. Signs will be erected in the day use areas warning of the risks of rock climbing and abseiling. The signs will provide appropriate messages regarding risk and safety. The Parks and Wildlife Commission policy for rock climbing will guide local management actions.
- The joint management partners will apply available measures (which may include after-hours patrols or regular staff presence in peak periods) to enforce alcohol prohibition.

##### **3.2 Information and interpretation:**

- Joint management partners will liaise with Tourism NT, Tourism Central Australia and other agencies to ensure promotion is consistent with the values of a sacred site. Joint management partners will ensure interpretive material provided is accurate and culturally appropriate.
- Signs should be installed advising visitors that Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men should not view the rock art.
- Visitor information will encourage the protection of the rock art and an understanding of the Park's cultural importance.

##### **3.3 Aboriginal use:**

- Traditional Owners may gather bush tucker or otherwise use the natural resources of the Park in a manner consistent with the effective management of the Park.
- CLC may support the Traditional Owners in recording oral histories and Indigenous knowledge to strengthen their responsibilities and traditions.
- Cultural knowledge will only be used with the prior consent of the Traditional Owners. Wherever possible, the partners will assist the Traditional Owners assert their intellectual property rights, consistent with the Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) Policy.

#### **3.4 Working with neighbours:**

- Where necessary, the partners will work with neighbours and the Alice Springs Town Council to address concerns and mutual interests including but not exclusive to fire management, fencing, boundary access, unauthorised use or development, control of stock and feral animals, weed control, visitor access and safety.



.....present and future generations can continue to enjoy the **unique rock art and scenic values** while learning about its history and cultural values.

## 4. Managing the Park

Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park is primarily managed to protect the unique rock art found within Emily and Jessie Gaps, and to provide visitors with opportunities to learn about and appreciate the cultural heritage values related to this sacred site. This section relates to the management of the Park's cultural and natural resources.

Management programs will ensure:

- Visitor use areas are maintained to provide a low-key bush experience;
- The rock art is protected for the benefit of future generations; and
- The critical habitat of endemic land snails and the vegetation of cultural significance are appropriately managed.

### 4.1 Protecting park values and infrastructure

#### Rock art

The regionally significant rock art found at Emily and Jessie Gaps is a major drawcard for visitors to Central Australia. The protection of these art sites will ensure cultural prosperity and visitation by locals and tourists alike.

An extensive rock art report covering Emily, Jessie and Heavitree Gaps and a site condition survey of the rock art at Emily Gap (Gunn, R.G. 1999; Ross, J 1999) guide the protection and monitoring of these sites. Fire, human interference and natural weathering are the main threats to rock art.

While art sites provide excellent enlightenments of Aboriginal spiritual connections to the country, such exposure can put sites at risk of damage from touching, deliberately damaging or souveniring the art. The main rock art panels at both Emily and Jessie Gaps are protected by small fences which allow visitors good views of the art without accessing, touching or otherwise damaging the rock art.



Elsewhere there are no physical barriers. Given the location of the rock art inside the gaps, keeping the art sites free of flammable vegetation prevents possible damage from fire.

### **Natural Values**

While Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park is not a high priority for biodiversity conservation due to its size, shape and location, it does contain vegetation of significance for cultural and ecological values.

Vegetation communities within and adjacent to the Park continue to provide bushfood and other cultural values to Traditional Owners. Some of these significant species include the native fig (*utyerrke*), supplejacks (*atnyere*), spearbush (*uyenpere*), bloodwoods (*arrkernke*) and river red gums (*apere*). The large fig trees (*utyerrke*) found in and near both Emily and Jessie Gaps also provide critical habitat for two endemic land snails, recognised as vulnerable in the Northern Territory (*TPWC Act*). As their names suggest *Semotrachia jessieana* is unique to Jessie Gap and *Semotrachia emilia* is unique to Emily Gap.

Recent work by Veronica Perrurle Dobson, an eastern Arrernte woman from Alice Springs, highlights how changing land use has affected the persistence of particular bushfoods or medicinal plants in and adjacent to the Park and, importantly, provides recommendations for management. Buffel and couch grass, fire and cattle are the main threats to these vegetation communities.

Priority for management will be the removal of couch and buffel grasses from the base of significant trees and plants to protect them from fire, to reduce fuel loads around other identified vegetation communities and sites; and to exclude cattle. The management of these culturally important vegetation communities provides opportunities for Indigenous Ecological Knowledge to be recorded, stored, shared, and importantly to inform management practices.

### **Access and facilities**

Access to Emily and Jessie Gaps car parks are via short well maintained gravel roads immediately off the Ross Highway. Vehicle access is only on these roads and within the car park areas. Barriers ensure vehicles remain only inside designated areas. Access to areas outside the visitor area car parks by motorbikes and other vehicles, both on the north and south of the Park, are of concern to the joint management partners.

Walking tracks lead to the rock art sites and are signposted. Facilities at both visitor areas include picnic tables, toilet pits, short walking tracks and interpretive signs. Camping is not permitted. In keeping with a 'leave no trace' philosophy, bins are not provided at either visitor area.

Visitor use areas and facilities, including the toilets and picnic areas can be protected from wildfire by the removal of flammable vegetation. Weeds will be managed in visitor use areas. Vandalism of facilities and natural and cultural values is a problem from time to time. Such vandalism has included graffiti or other damage on trees, signs or picnic tables. Interpretive signs will discourage such activity, particularly on the significant rock art sites.

### Objectives for Managing the Park

- Access and facilities are maintained to provide an enjoyable experience for visitors; and
- The rock art and vegetation of cultural and ecological significance are protected.

### Management Directions

**4.1 Park management program:** The operational management priority will be the protection of assets and visitor facilities, the rock art and identified vegetation communities, including critical land snail habitat, by: incorporating Indigenous ecological knowledge and priorities into Park management through the active involvement of Traditional Owners in planning and implementation activities as appropriate.

- **Managing weeds** – Buffel and couch grass will be actively managed to reduce the fuel load around visitor use areas and facilities, identified vegetation communities and trees. Weeds and plants will be removed or minimised around the rock art and facilities to reduce any damage caused by wildfire. Mexican poppy will be actively removed at Jessie and Emily Gap, for visitor amenity purposes. Weeds will continue to be monitored during patrols.
- **Managing fire** – Fuel loads will be kept at a level that minimises the risk of fire damage to the rock art, identified vegetation communities and trees, and to visitor use areas. Strategic fire breaks will be maintained. Parks and Wildlife Commission will burn in response to flushes in annual fuel as required. At annual meetings, Traditional Owners will determine their involvement in any burning activities anticipated. Parks and Wildlife Commission will liaise with appropriate fire authorities and adjoining landowners for fire planning.
- **Managing feral animals** – Two existing strategic fences on the northern side of the gaps and the boundary fence on the southern boundary line will be maintained. Cattle will be removed as soon as possible following their detection on the Park. The impact posed by other introduced species will be monitored and managed accordingly.

**4.2 Protecting the rock art:** Management and monitoring of the rock art sites, as outlined in this plan, will be guided by the Burra Charter principles and processes, and based on the guidelines provided by Ross (1999) and advice provided by NT Heritage.

- Existing barriers and interpretive information around the rock art will be maintained.
- The rock art will be kept clear of flammable vegetation.
- The rock art will be monitored as per a rock art photographic monitoring program.
- Interpretive signs will be reviewed for appropriate information regarding the protection of rock art and sacred sites.
- Training, funding and partnerships may be sought for archaeological rock art protection, management assessment and any other research as agreed by the partners.

**4.3 Cultural Heritage Management Plan:** A cultural heritage management plan will be developed with Traditional Owners and consideration of advice provided by specialist groups such as Heritage Branch. The partners and Central Land Council will identify supporting resources as required. A cultural heritage management plan may give consideration to:

- The protection of the rock art.

- Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) – Cultural knowledge will only be used with the prior consent of the Traditional Owners. Wherever possible, the partners will assist the Traditional Owners assert their intellectual property rights, consistent with standard policies developed and agreed by the CLC and Parks and Wildlife Commission.
- Protecting vegetation of cultural significance: Traditional Owners may identify additional management requirements for vegetation of cultural significance, outside those identified within the Park management program. This may include labelling trees and shrubs of significance for the purposes of traditional ecological knowledge transfer.
- Recording of oral histories and Indigenous Knowledge.
- “Back to country” – With support from the Central Land Council the partners may spend time on country together, facilitating transmission of cultural knowledge and skills between Traditional Owner families, to the younger generation and to the rangers, as appropriate.

#### **4.4 Access and Facilities:**

Any walking tracks and associated signs will be maintained for low impact recreational activity and to minimise erosion.

Facilities will be maintained to their low-key standard and any improvements or additions will reflect the Park’s natural character and cultural values.

Open fires will be permitted in designated fire pits only. Fire pits will not be provided at Emily Gap. To minimise the environmental impacts, firewood collection will not be permitted inside the Park. Fire restrictions will be enforced.

Rubbish bins will not be provided. Visitors will be encouraged to take their rubbish with them.

Parks and Wildlife Commission will uphold restrictions and guidelines for sacred sites or culturally sensitive areas of the Park as directed by Traditional Owners, including: Aboriginal women may not work inside the Gap; Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men should not view the rock art; and, only non-Aboriginal males may photograph the artwork for management purposes and are requested not to show the photographs to others. The photographs are not to be displayed in any form.



The **aims and directions** in this plan will be achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities.

## 5. Business Operations

Park operations are currently carried out by Park Rangers based at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve with regular patrols to Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park. At present, all funding to manage the Park is provided by the Northern Territory Government from funding appropriated to manage the Northern Territory's Parks estate. Major works and ongoing programs are subject to Territory-wide government priorities.

The Joint Management Partners recognise the potential social and economic benefits of commercial tourism within the Park. With the consent of affected Traditional Owners, the Lease and this Plan allow the partners to enter into benefit-sharing arrangements for commercial operations and developments within the Park.

Licences or sub-leases may be entered into where a secure form of land tenure is needed or for the long term security for commercial proponents. Any licence or sublease granted by the Northern Territory Government in respect of the Park must be consistent with the terms of the Park Lease and must have the prior written consent of the Alkeperre-atwarte Ayepe-arenye Arleye Aboriginal Land Trust on behalf of the Traditional Owners.

### 5.1 Development

Any development proposal will be considered by the joint management partners. Any proposal must be consistent with any applicable laws, the Park Lease, the ILUA and any relevant legislation.

The joint management partners agree that infrastructure and facilities should be in line with the character and existing natural setting of the Park. Traditional Owners have identified their interest in obtaining a sublease for use as an Aboriginal community living area on the Park as a means of being able to better engage in park management and cultural activities on the Park.

**Protecting sacred sites** – With three overlapping sacred sites registered with Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, the entire park area is protected under the NTASSA. The Anthwerrke (Emily

Gap) 5650-28 and Atherrke (Jessie Gap) 5750-2 registered sacred sites have boundaries that correlate with the Park boundary while the Nthwerrke Utnerrengatye 5650-50 sacred site extends east from, and including, Heavitree Gap, to overlap the Anthwerrke sacred site.

Protection for places that are of cultural significance in the Northern Territory is afforded under overlapping legislation. The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Cth) gives legal recognition to areas which that Act terms “sacred sites” and defines as: “a site that is sacred to Aboriginals or is otherwise of significance according to Aboriginal tradition, and includes any land that, under a law of the Northern Territory, is declared to be sacred to Aboriginals or of significance according to Aboriginal tradition”. The Act makes it an offence to enter or remain on land that is a sacred site. In the case of Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park in which the entire park area is a registered sacred site, the joint management partners are able to conduct routine management activities to the extent such activity does not damage or disturb sacred sites.

Complementary Northern Territory legislation, the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act* (NTASS Act) also provides protection for all sites that fall within the scope of this definition. This protection is generally provided in the form of an Authority Certificate from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority in response to land use proposals. It means that the traditional Aboriginal owners have an enforceable right to say who enters their sacred sites, and what cannot happen on their sacred sites. Illegal entry, works on or use of a sacred site is an offence under the NTASS Act.

Strong joint management will ensure that sacred sites are protected in accordance with Traditional Owners’ wishes. Under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Cth) the Central Land Council has a specific function to “assist Aboriginals in the taking of measures likely to assist in the protection of sacred sites” and under its established procedures will carry out this role in facilitating joint management.

**Protecting Heritage places** - The *Heritage Act* provides protection for prescribed Aboriginal archaeological places and objects in the Northern Territory. Any works or disturbance to Heritage places will require consultation and approvals in accordance with the *Heritage Act*.

**Expanding the Park** – The Jessie Gap climbing dune is both a sacred site (emu fat) and geologically significant site. This dune is east of the park on NT portion 4296. Traditional Owners have expressed interest in an expansion of the Park to incorporate this (or some of this) portion of land into park management to ensure the protection of this cultural site and areas of natural value.

**Mining** – Given the size and, shape of the Park, mining and extractive activities have the potential to impact adversely on its natural and cultural values. Mining companies can apply to the Northern Territory Government for permission to explore for minerals within the Park however, the entire area is Reserved Land, under the *Mineral Titles Act*, and consent is required from the Minister responsible for mining exploration or extraction. Under the ALRA, Traditional Owners have various rights in relation to mining and any companies interested in mineral exploration on the Park must also ensure they comply with those requirements.

## 5.2 Regulated activities

The joint management partners have developed permit guidelines. Any permit applications that fall outside these guidelines will be considered by the joint management partners.



### **Objectives of Business Operations**

The impact on park values from development and special activities are minimised.

### **Management Directions**

**5.1** The potential impacts of any proposed activity or development will be considered in line with the Commercial Tourism Development Policy and any legislation as appropriate.

**5.2** The joint management partners will work together to see that sacred sites are properly protected, supported by the Central Land Council and Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority as required. The Central Land Council will have primary responsibility for consulting traditional owners for all proposed work on the Park.

**5.3** Joint management partners may consider the development of an Aboriginal living area inside the Park, subject to a suitable location and available resources and that it is consistent with all legislation.

**5.4** Joint management partners may consider the extension of the Park by inclusion of all or part of adjoining NT portion 4296.

**5.5** Standard permit applications – Parks and Wildlife Commission can approve permit applications that involve activities or commercial concessions which comply with the agreed permit guidelines, require no special access, and/or are of a nature or type that has already been considered by the joint management partners.

**5.6** Non-standard permit applications - Parks and Wildlife Commission will consult with CLC if a permit proposal requests special access or activity outside the permit guidelines may be in conflict with the wishes of Traditional Owners, or may be part of a major commercial project.

**5.7** The joint management partners may request any unpermitted photographs and artwork in current use by commercial and tourism operators be withdrawn.

**5.8** Joint management partners may review/amend the permit guidelines from time to time.

## 6. Appendices

### Appendix 1. Selected References

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