

Kuyunba Conservation Reserve Draft Joint Management Plan

Joint Management Plan (DRAFT)

March 2024



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

This marker indicates words spoken by Traditional Owners throughout this document

“We [Traditional Owners] are pleased with existing management and remind us that the sensitive Dreaming stories associated with the Reserve will remain confidential, to be shared at discretion of Traditional Owners”

Cover image: Rock formation, Kuyunba Conservation Reserve, 2022 Parks and Wildlife Commission

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Acknowledgements

This Joint Management Plan is the result of many hours of consultation and planning. Key contributors include the Traditional Owners, the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap and the public of Alice Springs. The assistance provided by all stakeholders is gratefully acknowledged.

Planning for joint management of the Reserve began with a meeting of Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife Commission staff at Kuyunba Conservation Reserve in June 2022. The meeting established a planning team consisting of Traditional Owners, Senior Parks and Wildlife Commission staff and Central Land Council (CLC) staff. During 2022, this team drafted the Joint Management Plan through a series of participatory planning meetings with many hours of discussion. In March 2023, the Joint Management Plan was reviewed and approved by a full meeting of Traditional Owners before being released for public comment.

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Acronyms	Full form
AAPA	Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority
ALRA	<i>Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976</i>
CLC	Central Land Council
EPBC Act	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>
ERP	Emergency Response Plan
Framework Act	<i>Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act 2003</i>
Heritage Act	<i>Heritage Act 2011</i>
JMC	Joint Management Committee
The Partners	Joint Management Partners
The Plan	Joint Management Plan
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
NT	Northern Territory
Parks and Wildlife	Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory
TPWC Act	<i>Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976</i>
The Reserve	Kuyunba Conservation Reserve
Traditional Owners	Traditional Aboriginal owners

1. VISION STATEMENT

“Work together [to] look after our special hidden place for generations to come”

Throughout the life of this Joint Management Plan (the Plan) the Joint Management Partners (the Partners) for Kuyunba Conservation Reserve (the Reserve) will manage together to share skills, resources and knowledge, communicating clearly and working closely together to protect the Reserve. The Partners for the Reserve are the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory (Parks and Wildlife) and the traditional Aboriginal owners (Traditional Owners) of the Reserve.

A strong partnership will mean:

- The country and sacred sites are looked after properly for current and future generations;
- Traditional Owner knowledge and values are integrated into how the Reserve is managed;
- Traditional Owners are actively involved through jobs, training and business opportunities; and
- Visitors gain a deeper understanding of the country and its people.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Description of the Reserve

Kuyunba Conservation Reserve (the Reserve) is located approximately 15 kilometres south-west of Alice Springs in Central Australia (see Map 1 - Locality Map). The secluded Reserve covers an area of 647.23 ha and is largely a registered sacred site restricted to initiated Aboriginal men. People are allowed to visit the Reserve, however at the request of the Traditional Owners visitation is not promoted.

Land Administration

Comprising NT Portion 6663, the Reserve is owned by Kweyeunpe Park Land Trust as Freeheld Estate (estate in fee simple). The Reserve is listed as a Schedule 2 park under the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act 2003* (Framework Act), which means it is land with subsisting native title rights and interests. In 2007, Kweyeunpe Park Land Trust was established as a body corporate under section 9(3) of the Framework Act for the purpose of holding park freehold title over the portion. In 2009, NT Portion 6663 was re-declared as a Reserve with a 99 year Park Freehold Title lease entered into by the Kweyeunpe Park Land Trust and the Northern Territory of Australia, expiring on 21/02/2109. The terms of joint management by Parks and Wildlife and the Traditional Owners are set out in Schedule 4 of the Framework Act.

The Reserve first comprised of NT Portions 933, 935 and 942. These portions were consolidated in 2009 to form NT Portion 6663. In 1949 NT Portion 942 was proclaimed under Section 103 of the Crown Lands Ordinance. That Reserve was revoked in 1970 and proclaimed as Reserve 1289, including NT Portions 933 and 935, under Section 103 of the Crown Lands Ordinance. The purpose of the Reserve was for preserving a place of historical interest. The majority of the Reserve was registered as an Aboriginal sacred site in June 1980 under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* and named “Kweyeunpe”. Registration occurred at the request of an Aboriginal member of Parks and Wildlife. In November 1980 the Reserve was declared under Section 12 of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Act 1976* (TPWC Act) with right, title and interest vested in the Territory. On 7 November 2002, NT Portions 933, 935 and 942 were re-declared under Sections 12(1) (a), 12(1) (aa) and 17(5) of the TPWC Act to ensure management plans and by-laws maintained

full effect. This was the result of a High Court decision that had caused previous park declarations to be regarded as legally invalid.

The Reserve is an example of Parks and Wildlife's commitment to the preservation of the Northern Territory's (NT) rich and diverse Aboriginal culture. The Reserve was declared in 1980 following a request from one of the site's Traditional Owners who asked to keep the area unpublicised and intimate. The Reserve is intended to provide recognition and management of a registered Aboriginal sacred site by protecting known areas of cultural significance.

Cultural Values

The Reserve protects a sacred site, considerable archaeological material and galleries of rock paintings significant to the Eastern and Central Arrernte people. The area is associated with the Plum Tree Dreaming and contains important ceremonial and mythological sites associated with the plum tree totem. It is known as "the place of uninitiated men". Traditional ecological knowledge is held and maintained in traditional practices and passed on to younger generations. There is great potential for traditional ecological knowledge to contribute to park management, particularly fire management.

Natural Values

The Reserve's conservation values stem mostly from large stands of the white cypress pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*), and stands of mulga (*Acacia aneura*) occurring on the area's rocky slopes and valleys that protect these interesting species from the effects of fire. The Reserve contains a diversity of native animals, largely due to the variety of habitats present. This includes 2 threatened species, the grey falcon (*Falco hypoleucos*) which is listed as Vulnerable under both the NT TPWC Act and the federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act), and the Central Australian rock-wallaby (*Petrogale lateralis centralis*) which is listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act.

The research and scientific values of the Reserve derive from research opportunities into the prehistory of the Alice Springs region of the Central Australian ranges.

Recreational Values

The Reserve offers an opportunity for enjoyment of a secluded and undeveloped area in a manner consistent with protection of its cultural and natural values. It has considerable educational and interpretive values in providing visitors the opportunity to gain increased understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal art, mythology and culture. The tourism and recreational values of the area are related to its potential for low-key recreational pursuits such as walking, picnicking and Aboriginal cultural appreciation in an uncrowded, natural bush setting.

“[Visitors] can look, but don't take anything, no pictures [of the rock art]”

Park Infrastructure

The Reserve's unsealed access track leads to a small parking area defined by low timber bollards. A “Welcome to Kuyunba” sign, located at the start of a 700 metre visitor walking track, requests respect for the site's Aboriginal significance and provides information about the walk. The sign also identifies the point where no women or children are permitted beyond.

2.2. Purpose of the Reserve

The Reserve will be managed to:

- Protect Aboriginal sites of cultural significance, rock paintings, petroglyphs, and artefacts.
- Retain the area in as natural a state as practicable to protect native plants and animals habitats.
- Limit (but not restrict) visitor numbers to allow the opportunity to gain an understanding and appreciation of the Aboriginal values of the area.
- Offer low-key recreational opportunities such as walking and sightseeing based on the Reserve's natural and scenic values.
- Provide opportunities for further research into the region's prehistory.

2.3. Objectives of the Plan

This is the second management plan prepared for Kuyunba Conservation Reserve with the first prepared as a Plan of Management in 1993. The Joint Management Plan (the Plan) has been prepared by a planning committee consisting of Eastern and Central Arrernte representatives. The Plan is the result of consultation between the Traditional Owners of the Reserve and rangers, planning and joint management staff.

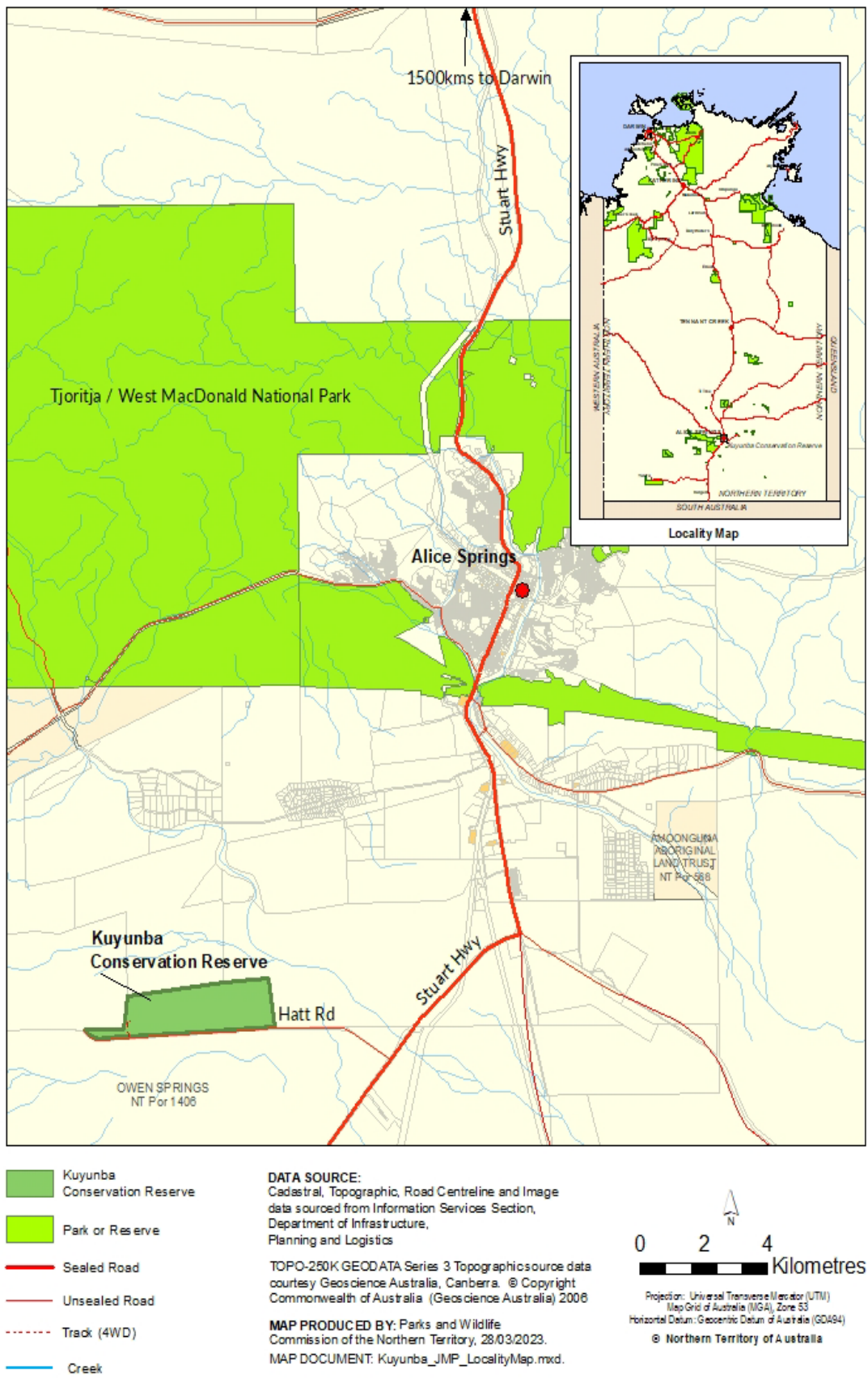
The Plan gives the strategic direction for the day-to-day operations of the Reserve, consistent with the requirements of Sections 25AB (objectives of joint management) and 25AC (principles of joint management) of the TPWC Act.

The Plan explains how the Partners will work together and it determines how management performance will be measured (Appendix 2).

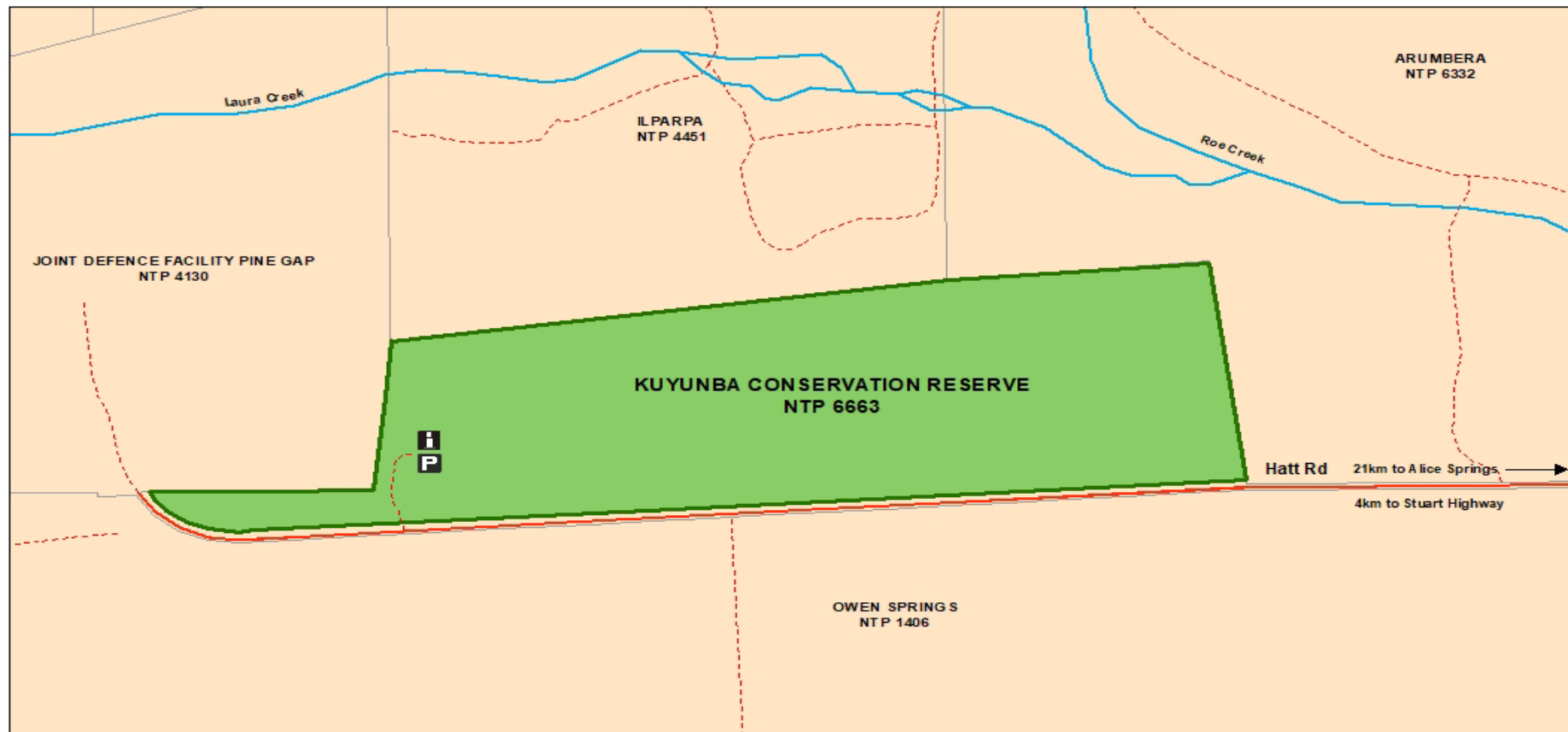
The Plan recognises the unique scientific and cultural significance of the Reserve and proposes management guidelines aimed to conserve the Reserve for current and future generations to understand and enjoy.









The Plan will remain in effect until amended or replaced by a new plan.

Map 1. Locality Map Kuyunba Conservation Reserve



Map 2. Park Map Kuyunba Conservation Reserve



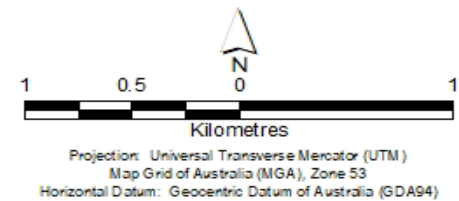
- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|---------------|
|  | Kuyunba Conservation Reserve |  | Sealed Road |
|  | Cadastral |  | Unsealed Road |
|  | Information |  | Track (4WD) |
|  | Parking |  | Drainage |

DATA SOURCE:
Cadastral, Topographic, Road Centreline and Image data sourced from Information Services Section, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics

MAP PRODUCED BY: Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory, 28/03/2023.

MAP DOCUMENT: Kuyunba_Park_Map.mxd.

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2.4. Traditional Owners

Our Story

“Keeping the story for younger generations”

The Reserve lies within the traditional lands of the Eastern and Central Arrernte people.

“We are custodians of the Kwekatye [ku-ka-tja] (Young Boys) Dreaming which travels through Alice Springs and Bond Springs, stopping at a number of sacred sites, including Kuyunba. Senior Apmereke-artweye (Traditional Owners) would have come with other men to camp along a rocky outcrop on the Reserve, observed special places and teach younger men sacred songs relating to the creation of the sites, only senior men pass on the cultural knowledge of this site”

In more recent times male kwertengerle [kul-un-gul] (caretakers of country) for the Reserve have reported infrequent visits to the Reserve. The main purpose of visits has been to maintain and look after the site. For Traditional Owner cultural information specifically, information contained within the Kwekatye Dreaming narrative is gender restricted and should remain with Traditional Owners and shared at their discretion. Male kwertengerle will continue to look after the Reserve with some expressing an interest in ranger work or working with rangers on the Reserve.

The important cultural and art sites associated with the Reserve are not identified in the Plan in order to preserve their cultural and spiritual value in accordance with the wishes of the area's traditional custodians.

“We call Pine Gap [Qu-na-ben] and Ampetyane country is all around”

Shared History

The beginnings of formal management for the Reserve predate the land rights era in the Northern Territory. During the 1970's Traditional Owners were reportedly involved in the negotiation of the Pine Gap base and facility, and according to one Traditional Owner, they instructed authorities to adjust the boundaries of Pine Gap to keep a distance from the Reserve's sacred shelters.

Younger male custodians currently have a strong rapport with Pine Gap's security team and are planning to visit the facility themselves.

“[It's] ok to have those cameras there. [They have] been there since the 80's. They're just looking after that site. My grandfather used to go there, he's seen that”

3. GOVERNANCE

Kuyunba Conservation Reserve 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 Reserve. Under section 25AA of the TPWC Act the Partners for the Reserve are the Northern Territory of Australia (represented by Parks and Wildlife) and the traditional Aboriginal owners (Traditional Owners) of the Reserve.

In developing and implementing the Plan, the 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 1993* (Cth). The Partners must manage the Reserve in accordance with the Plan.

3.1. Joint Management

Joint management is about Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife looking after the Reserve in ways that meet the aspirations of the Partners. It is about working together, exchanging knowledge and expertise, solving problems and sharing decisions.

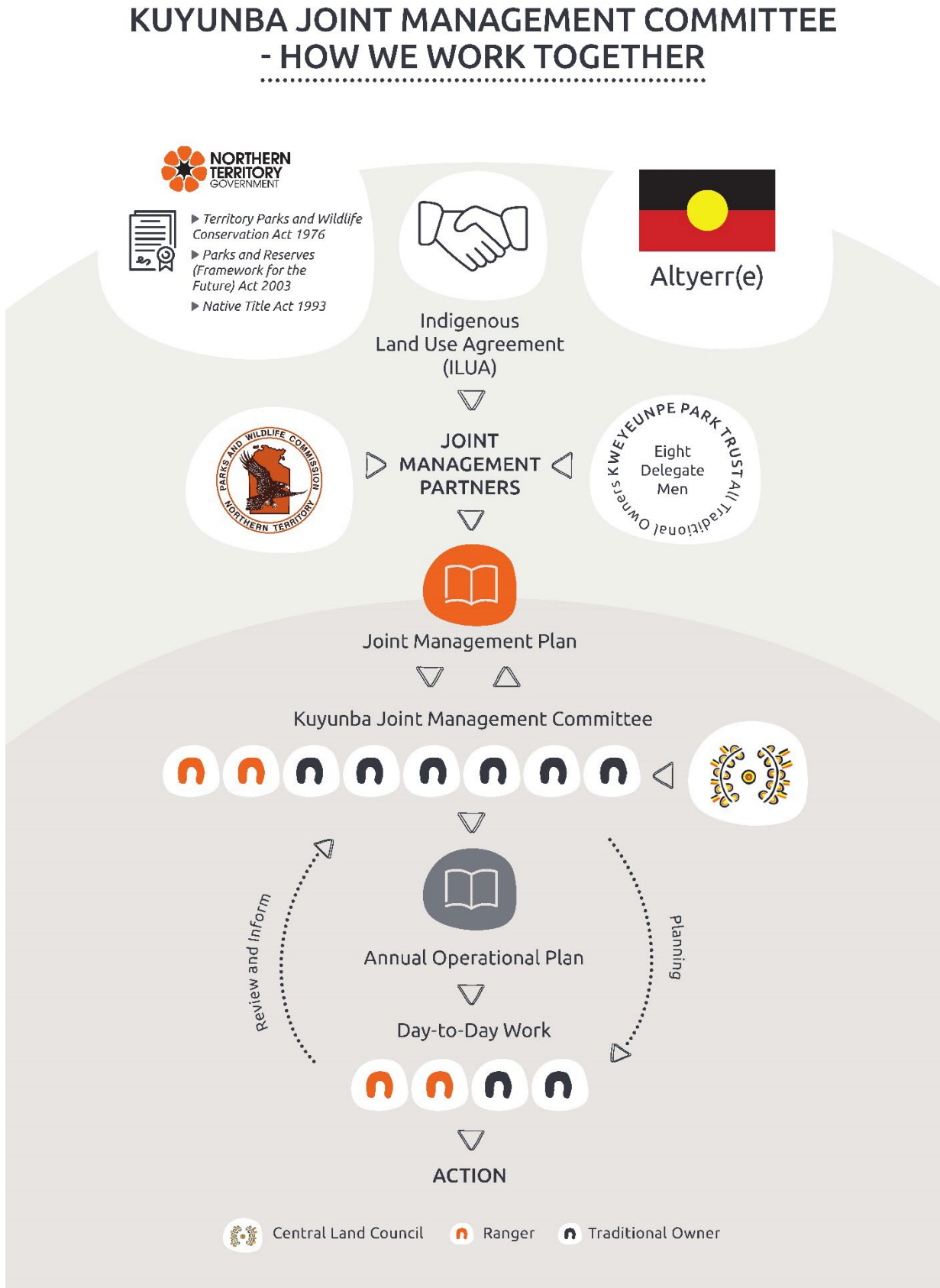
All decisions for the Reserve will be made as partners. Unless delegated by the Partners, Parks and Wildlife cannot make unilateral decisions. If the partnership is working well, outcomes include equitable and efficient decision-making leading to healthy culture and country, visitors continuing to have safe and enjoyable experiences and the broader community being well informed and involved.

“We are there to give our voice. [Joint management is] looking after special places, looking after traditional and family knowledge, keeping stories strong, cultural use and current use of the area, keeping visitors safe, [maintaining] fire breaks, [and getting] casual work”

Good joint management has a clear structure and process for making decisions. The Partners accept and understand their roles and responsibilities within this framework (Figure 1). The Partners are confident that this way of learning and working together will provide equity and continue to build trust and respect. The Partners acknowledge that it will take time and support to build capacity and a strong working relationship.

To explain 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.

Figure 1 Roles and Responsibilities



Principles for Effective Governance

- Shared and equitable decision-making and accountability between the Partners.
- Time spent together on country between the Partners to develop mutual trust, respect and understanding.
- Aboriginal decision-making processes are respected.
- Management priorities are guided by the Reserve's key values.
- Planning and decision making identifies and minimises risk.
- Engagement and employment of Traditional Owners in management operations is central to joint management success.
- Resources are used effectively.
- Joint management is reviewed regularly to ensure it is working well and keeps improving.
- There is public support for joint management.

3.2. Planning and Decision-Making

3.2.1. A Partnership Approach

Joint management provides opportunities to make better management decisions based on a combination of Aboriginal and scientific approaches to land management. The Partners will make decisions by consensus. This relies on meaningful engagement with Traditional Owners. Accordingly, success will be measured against the achievement of aims in the Plan and by the satisfaction of the Partners.

For Traditional Owners of the Reserve it is essential that appropriate senior men are involved in making decisions related to their country. Across the Reserve, Eastern and Central Arrernte representatives 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 Reserve contains important sacred sites it is essential that relevant senior Traditional Owners are involved in any decisions that occur in these areas.

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. Traditional Owners value 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 Reserve.

“Unsolicited disclosure of confidential stories threatens the continued existence of our culture. It shouldn't be a book, it should be passed on to younger male generations. That's how we keep our cultures alive. Only men hear the Kwekatye Dreaming, not women”

3.2.2. Roles and Responsibilities

Both Partners have responsibilities to look after the Reserve and each Partner has clear roles and responsibilities to inform and explain decision making (Table 1).

The Joint Management Committee (JMC) is the primary governing body for the Reserve. The JMC was set up to assist the Partners in meeting the requirements of joint management as written in the TPWC Act and the ILUA.

The JMC's principle functions are to provide strategic direction for Reserve operations, determine local policy and procedures, and review progress against management directions in the Plan. The JMC may establish working groups to ensure that decisions are made in a timely manner and issues are carefully considered. Further details on the Reserve's JMC is provided in Management Direction 3.1 Joint Management Committee.

Traditional Owners are essential for providing direction for the management of the Reserve. Senior Traditional Owners have individual and collective responsibilities and cultural obligations for making decisions about 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 for the land, law and culture.

Parks and Wildlife resource, finance and implement the Reserve's ongoing day-to-day management, interpretation, planning and infrastructure programs. Parks and Wildlife staff represent the Northern Territory of Australia in the joint management partnership and contribute to setting the management direction.

Although not a partner, the **Central Land Council (CLC)** is an independent statutory body created under the ALRA and is responsible for representing and protecting the interests of the Traditional Owners in the Reserve's management under the TPWC Act. The CLC will support Traditional Owners' interests and arrange consultations, assist with monitoring joint management processes and help resolve any issues that may arise between the Partners.

Table 1 Decision-making Framework

Joint Management Committee	Reserve Operational Staff
Exercise authority and accountability granted to it by the wider group of Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife.	Undertake day-to-day Reserve management operations such as patrols, maintenance, visitor services, compliance, community relations and search and rescue.
Listen to advice and provide feedback from the wider Traditional Owner group and consult with community stakeholders.	Maximise on-ground participation of Traditional Owners in management of the Reserve.
Set strategic direction. Develop and approve management strategies, including a 5 year Central Parks district Integrated Country Strategies, Cultural Heritage Management Plans and Visitor Strategies. Approve work programs and internal annual budgets.	Prepare an Annual Action Plan and Report and implement operational programs, policy and procedures in line with approved management strategies. This includes fire, weed and feral animal programs, cultural programs, visitor experience, heritage conservation and community engagement.
Delegate decision-making and tasks Reserve Operational Staff, advisory or working groups.	Report progress to the JMC.
Approve park-specific policy and guidelines specific to the Reserve.	Meet with stakeholders and neighbours.

Joint Management Committee	Reserve Operational Staff
Set direction and decision-making criteria to evaluate permits, contracts, licences, development and unique proposals.	Issue permits, contracts and licenses according to relevant laws, policy, guidelines and decision-making criteria approved by the JMC.
Assess and endorse proposals for new and unique commercial activities, third party interests, licensing, sub-leasing, Reserve extensions, living areas and other proposals not specified in the Plan. At times a Traditional Owner meeting will be required.	In conjunction with relevant government agencies, prepare works proposals for JMC consideration and issue approved works contracts, such as those for maintaining, replacing, repairing or improving existing infrastructure and new works.
Monitor and evaluate management performance.	Monitor management effectiveness and adjust management according to new information, improved procedures, new technology and new threats or problems.

3.2.3. Building Effective Governance and Continuous Improvement

The Partners recognise the need for training to build effective governance. Traditional Owners will teach rangers cross-cultural skills, language and Aboriginal land management techniques, while rangers will share their knowledge of planning, budgeting and Reserve management with Traditional Owners.

The Partners are also committed to continuous learning and improvement. This involves tracking progress against performance measures, evaluating results and changing management methods to embrace new knowledge and insights (Appendix 2). It also involves monitoring to measure efficiencies, improved effectiveness and progress toward long-term aims.

“Working together for generations to come”

Governance Objective

Effective governance and a strong and equitable partnership will protect the Reserve’s natural and cultural values.

Management Directions

3.1 Joint Management Committee

The JMC will oversee strategic direction of the Reserve. For matters that potentially affect sacred sites, the JMC 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.
- Members – The Committee will initially consist of Traditional Owners representing the estate group (senior men) and 2 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, with meetings on country encouraged.
- Making decisions – Decisions will be made by consensus. The roles and decision-making responsibilities of the Committee are outlined in Table 1 Decision-making Framework.

3.2 Technical advice, 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 JMC or address specific tasks, such as for fire management, cultural heritage interpretation, tourism and policy development. Other people will be invited by the Partners to attend meetings and provide advice on particular problems or to represent community interests (for example defence, tourism or pastoral industries).

3.3 Supporting and building effective governance

Joint management is a process of continuous learning and improvement. In the future, governance arrangements may be refined to increase effectiveness. Governance training will be provided to the Partners. Training will give the Partners the skills to work well together, identified by monitoring and evaluation outcomes.

3.4 Representation

The CLC will represent and support Traditional Owners' interests and arrange consultations when required.

3.5 Professional development

Professional standards and staff competencies will be supported by ongoing training in all aspects of Reserve management. There will be an emphasis on cross-cultural training run by Traditional Owners and other providers.

3.6 Information exchange

JMC members will provide the collective expertise, interests and concerns of their group to the broader committee. JMC 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. Parks and Wildlife will be responsible for effectively communicating information about Reserve management programs to the JMC.

3.7 Monitoring joint management

A monitoring and evaluation program will be developed that will help achieve effective governance. Performance will be measured annually using indicators relating to the satisfaction of the Partners and effectiveness of the partnership (Appendix 2).

3.8 Dispute resolution

The Partners will resolve disputes through open discussion and communication, involving the CLC as required or requested by the Traditional Owners. Should a dispute arise between the Partners that cannot be resolved by talking together, the parties will jointly appoint an independent mediator to facilitate a mutually accepted decision. If the Traditional Owners disagree with each other then the CLC will facilitate the mediation process, independent of Parks and Wildlife.

4. MANAGING COUNTRY

“Got to respect [our culture]. Males work around that site for now”

Principles for Managing Country

- The country needs looking after to stay healthy; this means working and growing together, using both Aboriginal and western knowledge.
- The Reserve’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: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (Burra Charter) gives 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 sites and rock formations is the most important thing to do.

4.1. Cultural Values

“[Visitors should] stay on the track, look where they’re walking and be careful”

The entire area covered by the Reserve has important cultural significance to Traditional Owners. The Partners are committed to ensure these cultural values are recognised and managed in the ways that the Traditional Owners agree. The Partners will look after the plants and animals, landscapes and places of cultural importance using both traditional and scientific knowledge.

Traditional Owners’ responsibilities for the Reserve are well-defined and areas of cultural significance are already recorded. The spatial restrictions around the 700 metre marked loop track have been shared with Parks staff and are found in signage at the public entrance to the Reserve which limits access of women and children. A site at the eastern end of the Reserve is restricted to men only, for management purposes where this is not possible, women may enter that space.

4.1.1. Looking after Culture

“Gender restrictions placed upon the Reserve are to be sustained. Parks staff should honour these restrictions”

Traditional Owners have responsibilities under cultural law to protect their land and prevent damage. It is essential that everyone in joint management understands and respects that there are different ways of knowing and caring for country. Traditional Owners have high stakes in land management due to their social, cultural and spiritual relationships with and responsibility to the land, and this must be respected in the joint management context.

“Males are looking after that story”

Traditional ecological knowledge is embedded in cultural law and is held and maintained in traditional practice. This knowledge is also the source of people’s being and ties people to their country. There is little separation between self and the environment. Their relationships with country are reciprocal, as they look after and care for country, which in turn is the source of their well-being.

For Traditional Owners, looking after country involves being present on country and teaching young children how to track and hunt animals, how to collect bush tucker and medicines, the names of places, where they can and cannot go, how to act and behave in country, and eventually the stories, songs, rituals, and ceremonies associated with the country.

4.1.2. Traditional Use

“Plums are sacred and should not be touched”

The TPWC Act does not limit 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. Aboriginal people who have traditional rights within the Reserve are permitted to hunt and gather on country for non-commercial purposes, in accordance with Section 122 of the TPWC Act. The Partners agree that traditional hunting and gathering can be managed in a way that will not cause problems with visitor safety or wildlife conservation objectives of the Reserve.

Traditional Owners identified plum and passionfruit trees during the preparation of the Plan. They reported the following seasonal information, noting that bush plums are sacred and should not be touched:

- Bush plums (Ahakeye) *Santalum lanceolatum* appear after summer rain and can be eaten when they are soft and dark in colour.
- Bush passionfruit (Arrutnenge) *Capparis spinosa varietas nummularia* also appear after summer rain and turn yellow and soft when they are ripe.

Traditional Owners have advised that public information for the Reserve must not include any cultural references to bush plums, including the Plum Tree Dreaming. New rangers will be advised of cultural requirements during their cultural induction to the Reserve.

4.1.3. Aboriginal Heritage

The Reserve became a site of archaeological interest in early 1980 and respective archaeological reporting has provided key information about Arrernte occupation and land use of the Reserve. The Partners will instruct archaeologists that any future publications about the Reserve are not to reference Dreaming stories. Traditional Owners request only male archaeologists access the Special Protection Zone (see Map 3 and Table 2) for the purposes of research.

Traditional Owners look for ways to record cultural heritage and incorporate indigenous ecological knowledge, skills and experiences into ongoing ground operations for the Reserve. Resources within the Reserve are largely decided by seasons and the life cycles of individual species, cultural rules and responsibilities established from this knowledge provide guidance on the use of country. This includes what and when each species should be harvested, how to tell when they are ‘fat’ or ‘ready’, who should not eat certain things, and not to waste things. Traditional Owners wish to prepare information on bush tucker and interpret the significance of the Reserve to the rangers, commercial operators, and visitors.

The main purpose of visits to the Reserve has been to maintain and look after the site. Traditional Owners welcome maintenance of the main rock shelters around the 700 metre loop track, including slashing of buffel

grass and cleaning sites on request from Senior Traditional Owners. The preservation of the rock paintings within the shelters is a priority. Park staff will work closely with Traditional Owners in maintaining these areas, including taking Traditional Owners on country where possible when maintenance is required.

The principles and procedures outlined in the Burra Charter will provide guidance in the management of the Reserve's cultural heritage.

4.2. Natural Values

"[There are] lots of rocks. It's like a little shade, like a little wind break for camping under"

The Reserve lies within the spectacular system of rugged metamorphic and sedimentary ridges and valleys that make up several range systems of the MacDonnell Ranges bioregion; one of 85 bioregions identified nationally. These range systems are cut by gorges and gaps, many of which contain long lasting or permanent water and a wide variety of habitats. The Reserve comprises sandy flats across the southern and central areas, with low rounded windblown sand dunes in the south-east corner. These flats are broken in the north and north-west by outcrops of weathered red sandstone. The dominant ridge on the Reserve has an east-west orientation and rises twenty metres above the adjoining flats. It provides a scenic backdrop and sheltered environment for the white cypress pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) and mulga (*Acacia aneura*) which line the valley floor.

The north and north-west of the Reserve is dominated by a series of low, parallel ridges of Mereenie Sandstone dipping sharply to the south. The ridges feature prominent crossbedding, ripple marks and a distinctive red weathered surface. To the south, a flat plain of red sandy soils, resulting from erosion of the ridges, overlies deeper Hermannsburg Sandstone. Drainage lines emerging from the ridges onto these flats have, in places, eroded channels up to 2 metres deep. However these appear to be naturally occurring features of the Reserve.

The main geological value of the area is the water holding capacity of the Mereenie Sandstone that is highly permeable. Most of Alice Springs' water supply is obtained from the Mereenie Sandstone via a bore field immediately south-east of the Reserve.

"It's maintaining the roads, the fence line and fire breaks, and all the plants and animals"

4.2.1. Water Resources

"No fishing. Walking on designated track and wildlife viewing is ok"

Surface water is very limited throughout the Reserve. All watercourses on the Reserve are ephemeral. The area's major watercourse is a small creek which drains the central parts of the Reserve, flowing northward through a small pass in the ridge. Several small drainage lines flow from the ridges south onto the adjoining sand flats. Small rock holes occur in the Reserve's north-west corner, however these retain water for only very short periods after rain. The permeable nature of the sandstone substratum facilitates water infiltration rather than retention of water above ground.

The Power and Water Authority has established 3 monitoring bores along the southern margin of the Reserve's ridge. These bores are used to determine the extent of water table drawdown from pumping in the Roe Creek Bore field. In the 1980's the Northern Territory Government installed a bore (Roe Creek, RN013829), on the north western boundary within the Reserve. Northern Territory Government Water Resources monitoring officers monitor the bore twice a year.

4.2.2. Plants

The Reserve contains a variety of vegetation types associated with the sandy flats and sandstone ridges and over 130 native plant (flora) species have been recorded on the Reserve.

The sandy flats that cover the southern half of the Reserve, flanking the sandstone ridges, support groves of tall open shrub land mixed with spinifex hummock grassland (*Triodia* species). Acacia species, chiefly mulga (*Acacia aneura*) and witchetty bush (*Acacia kempeana*), and Cassia species, dominate these shrub lands. Scattered ironwoods (*Acacia estrophiolata*) are also common across these flats. The central sandy valley in the eastern half of the Reserve supports a similar mix of plant species but as a low open shrub land with fewer Ironwoods.

The Reserve's sandstone ridges support a low mixed shrub land and spinifex (*Triodia* species). The more broken outcrops along the southern edge of the ridge support the Reserve's extensive mature stands of the white cypress pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*). These stands are of particular interest having both high aesthetic value and as examples of this distinctive species existing in a fire shadow area. Native fig (*Ficus brachypoda*) occur in the south-west corner of the Reserve's ridge country near the more accessible rock art site and carpark.

A small stand of river red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) is found on the sandy flats near the access road in the Reserve's south-west. Other Eucalyptus species, specifically bloodwoods (*Corymbia* sp.) and ghost gums (*Corymbia aparreinja*), occur in the Reserve's central northern valleys as a small area of attractive open woodland. No rare or threatened plant species have been recorded on the Reserve. Fencing of much of the Reserve's boundary has resulted in exclusion of stock from the area and facilitated regeneration and protection of the native vegetation.

4.2.3. Animals

The Reserve contains a reasonable diversity of native animals (fauna species), largely due to the variety of habitats present. This includes 83 bird species, 13 mammal species and 27 reptile species that have been recorded in the Reserve. 2 threatened species have been recorded in the Reserve. These are the grey falcon (*Falco hypoleucos*) which is listed as Vulnerable under both the NT TPWC Act and federal EPBC Act, and the central Australian rock-wallaby (*Petrogale lateralis centralis*) which is listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act.

4.3. Managing Threats

“We need joint management in place to protect the Reserve”

The main threats to the natural and cultural values of the Reserve are large wildfires, changed fire regimes, introduced weeds (e.g. buffel grass) and feral animals (e.g. rabbits).

Wildfire and changed fire regimes are a threat to the Reserve's cultural values as well as to fire sensitive native plants and animals. Fire has long been a part of the Central Australian environment and has played an important part in shaping the region's plants and animals. Located in a "fire shadow", the surrounding topography and landscape provides a sheltering effect that largely protects the Reserve from wildfires. This has helped shape the Reserve's vegetation and habitats, in particular the development of large mature stands of the fire sensitive white cypress pine.

An ICS for the Central Parks district will be prepared and direct fire mitigation activities for the Reserve. An Annual Action Plan will specify the location and treatment of firebreaks, fire management unit boundaries and fire exclusion zones. It also details priority areas for hazard reduction operations and areas where the controlled use of fire is undertaken for ecological purposes. The Reserve is located within a Fire Protection Zone surrounding Alice Springs, declared under the *Bushfires Management Act 2016*.

“Protect rock art from rain and fire”

The spread of weeds is a threat to the Reserve’s natural ecosystems, changing the diversity and abundance of native plants and animals. A total of 8 introduced plant species have been recorded within the Reserve. These include *Argemone mexicana*, which is a prickly herb, *Cenchrus echinatus* and *Rhynchelytrum repens*, which are introduced grasses, and Bathurst burr (*Xanthium spinosum*) and buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*), which appear to be invading some eastern areas of the Reserve. Although buffel grass is not a declared weed in the Northern Territory it is a priority weed for strategic control in the Alice Springs region (Alice Springs Regional Weeds Strategy 2021 – 2026).

The European rabbit, (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) is a threat to the Reserve, degrading the natural landscape by damaging soils and causing erosion, destroying native plants and competing with native animals for food. They are known to proliferate within the Reserve when conditions are favourable, with the soft sandy soils providing ideal conditions for burrows. Large warrens are known to occur on pastoral country immediately to the south of the Reserve. Feral cats, (*Felis catus*) are also known to occur within the Reserve. They are a serious threat to native animals due to direct predation, by competing for food and shelter and through the spread of disease. When not excluded by adequate fencing, cattle, (*Bos taurus*) and horses (*Equus caballus*) are a threat to the Reserve. They can cause major damage through trampling of native plants, muddying waters, spreading weeds and competing with native animals for food. Boundary fencing has proven successful in excluding these 2 species from the Reserve.

The Central Parks district Integrated Country Strategy will guide the Partners in caring for the Reserve’s natural values. This Strategy will describe the most important conservation values for the Reserve. The Strategy will include measurable indicators of health identified for values and a strategic risk assessment to evaluate threatening processes and risks to values. A systematic monitoring and evaluation framework is used to assess the effectiveness of management, with a focus on condition, pressure and response to indicators and measures. Involving Traditional Owners and applying their ecological knowledge is central to the Strategy and its implementation. The Strategy is a living document, ensuring improved understanding is incorporated and adaptive management is progressed. By combining old and new knowledge, the Partners will keep the country healthy to protect plants and animals and their habitat.

Natural Values Objective

Protect the Reserve’s natural and cultural values, with Aboriginal knowledge and interests built into management programs.

Management Directions

4.1 Aboriginal knowledge, practices, and priorities

- Indigenous ecological knowledge sharing will occur so that the next generation of rangers and caretakers have cultural knowledge of the species and site.

4.2 Aboriginal hunting and gathering

- The TPWC Act supports Traditional Owner use of the Reserve’s resources. The Partners will promote sustainable use and develop policy and guidelines as necessary. Policy and guidelines will ensure hunting and gathering is careful of visitor safety and does not go against Reserve values.

4.2 Cultural Heritage Strategy

- A Cultural Heritage Strategy developed by the CLC after talking with Traditional Owners will be endorsed by the JMC for implementation. The Partners and the CLC will work together to identify any need for resources to make this happen.

- The basic principles and procedures of the Burra Charter will be followed in the conservation of heritage places.

4.3 Aboriginal cultural business and culturally sensitive areas

- Parks and Wildlife will respect and adhere to Traditional Owners' advice regarding cultural matters, customs, obligations and gender restrictions. Ample notice will be given to the public regarding temporary closures.

4.4 Cultural induction / Cross-cultural training

- New staff (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) will be inducted by senior Traditional Owners before working on the Reserve, to understand the importance of gender restrictions and protection of sacred bush plums (Ahakeye and Arrutnenge).

4.5 Operational programs

- An Annual Action Plan and Report will be prepared and approved by the JMC every year.

4.6 Collaboration with stakeholders

- Collaboration will be encouraged with neighbours to gain better management and employment outcomes and improve economies of scale. Plans will be developed as early as possible with neighbours for improved fire, feral and weed management.

4.7 Fire management

- No fires are allowed on the Reserve.

- An Annual Action Plan and Report (Management Direction 4.5), with elements dedicated to fire management, will be developed with Traditional Owners and approved through the JMC annually.

- Habitat condition thresholds for fire in the Reserve will be determined to adjust fire history targets over the lifetime of the Plan.

4.8 Rock Art Protection

- Traditional Owners will advise park operations on best ways to protect rock art.

- Traditional Owners feel strongly that anyone damaging rock art should be fined on the spot.

4.9 Feral animal control

- Fencing will be maintained and a fence maintenance program developed.

- An Annual Action Plan and Report (Management Direction 4.5), with elements dedicated to feral animal management, will be developed with Traditional Owners and approved through the JMC each year.

4.10 Cattle management

- With an approved permit under the TPWC Act, neighbouring property managers will have access to the Reserve to muster their cattle according to the *Livestock Act 2008*.

4.11 Weed control

- Monitoring of environmental weeds, especially buffel grass, will take place when needed and as a minimum every 1 – 2 years.

- An Annual Action Plan and Report (Management Direction 4.5), with information focussed on weed management, will be developed with Traditional Owners and approved through the JMC annually.

- Fenced areas will be checked as part of routine ranger patrols.

4.12 Soil conservation

- An Annual Action Plan and Report (Management Direction 4.5), with information focussed on soil conservation, will be developed with Traditional Owners and approved through the JMC each year.

5. VISITOR EXPERIENCES

“Visitors can look around, just be careful. Don’t take anything. No camping”

Principles for Visitor Experiences

- Keeping the undeveloped, wild and isolated character of the Reserve.
- Ensuring that visitors have a positive Reserve experience and leave with a sense of connection.
- Making sure that visitors are safe. Ensuring visitors know where they can and cannot go on the Reserve.

“Visitors are saying it’s a special place with a special meaning, A good traditional sacred men’s site, another great NT experience”

Visitors typically come to the Reserve to view the main Aboriginal art site or enjoy the area's solitude and scenic bushland while relaxing or walking. Most visitors only stay for a couple of hours. The Reserve's low-key character and limited visitation, despite being an attractive area easily accessible from Alice Springs, are important elements in its appeal to local residents and better informed tourists. Traditional Owners are happy for the public (including women and children on the marked stage of the track) to observe and consider the rock art, but direct access to the site should remain exclusively with those custodians who have knowledge of the Dreaming narrative detailed in the artwork.

5.1. Recreational and Tourism Values

Kuyunba Conservation Reserve is largely an area restricted to Aboriginal adult initiated men. Non-Aboriginal men are permitted to walk the 700 metre loop track, however no women or children are permitted beyond an identified point on the visitor track – indicated on the ‘Welcome to Kuyunba’ signage at the start of the walk.

“A visitor that goes there [to the Reserve], like a bird watcher, they can go and do that [bird watching]. Just take a picture of the bird [not the rock art]”

5.1.1. A Low Key Bush Experience

The Reserve will be presented as a low key bush destination that appeals to those wanting to observe the importance of a culturally significant site. For visitors, the rock outcrop and art is the highlight of the Reserve, being one of the most important sacred male initiation sites in the area. Visitors will experience a special place and leave with an appreciation of the significance of this site.



Image 1. Visitor book & Reserve entry sign, Kuyunba Conservation Reserve, 2022 – Park Planning, NTG

5.1.2. Engaging with a Cultural Landscape

Being a sacred site, the entire Kuyunba Conservation Reserve is a special and sensitive space. Sites of spiritual significance including several galleries of Aboriginal rock art, archaeological material and Aboriginal stone artefacts are common through the Reserve. Traditional Owners of the Reserve maintain their spiritual and cultural connections with their country. To reflect and promote their continued living connection with their country, Traditional Owners stress the importance of carefully managing the cultural information given to the public. Cultural restrictions are presented through warning signs, which are clearly displayed along the access road and walking track to warn Aboriginal visitors that the Reserve is an important men's sacred site and dangerous for Aboriginal women, children and uninitiated men.

5.2. Managing for Visitors

“Only adult men walk that entire track”

The Reserve receives minimal visitor use with annual visitation estimated to be between 5000 – 7000 people. From ranger observations, the majority of visitors using the Reserve are residents of Alice Springs. In keeping with Traditional Owner requests for low-profile management, the Reserve is not promoted as a major visitor destination. The Reserve is not signposted on the Stuart Highway nor is it publicised online or through a Parks and Wildlife pre-visit information brochure.

5.2.1. Visitor Access

An unsealed access road off Hatt Road leads into the western end of the Reserve. The access road is an unsealed track that is occasionally sandy and guttered following rains. It leads to a small parking area defined by low timber bollards.

A 700 metre walking track leads east from the parking area. The track is well defined and marked, the track meanders around a low sandstone ridge and stands of white cypress pine (*Callitris glaucophylla*) before returning to the parking area. It provides access to a small Aboriginal art site at its eastern turning point

(women and children are asked to turn back here) and a major art site approximately 50 metres north-east of the carpark. A low post and wire fence has been installed to regulate visitor access to the art sites.

During the life of this Plan a feasibility study will be undertaken, assessing potential improvements to existing facilities, including signage and fencing of sacred areas.

5.2.2. Information and Interpretation

Information and interpretation plays an important role in visitor management by informing people about the Reserve and how visitors can respect the values of the area. Public education informs visitors about facilities, activities and relevant regulations and explains or interprets natural and cultural features.

As a low-profile Reserve, information and interpretation is limited. Signs within the Reserve include an entry sign, regulatory signage within the carpark, a 'Welcome to Kuyunba' sign at the start of the 700 metre visitor walking track. A regulatory sign and an interpretive sign explaining aspects of the rock art is located at the first viewing area along the track where women and children are asked not to go beyond for their safety.

5.2.3. Visitor Safety

Rangers have an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) for the Central Parks district. The ERP is reviewed annually with stakeholders, including the emergency services NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services unit. The ERP gives clear direction in the event of an emergency.

Managing Visitors Objectives

Safe, sustainable, and outstanding experiences connect visitors to the Reserve and its people.

The public respect the site and understand the area is gender restricted.

Management Directions

5.1 Visitor access

- Access will be maintained as an unsealed track standard only.
- Driving hazards and access limits will be described in information before people visit.

5.2 Activities and facilities

- The JMC will consider and endorse works plans for each year for all proposed developments including sighting of all visitor infrastructure.
- A feasibility study will be conducted of existing facilities to determine any future redesign and upgrades.
- Camping is currently not allowed in the Reserve.
- A permit is essential for drone use. Conditions apply and a permit must be obtained before arriving at the Reserve.
- There are no toilet facilities within the Reserve.
- Fires and collection of firewood is not allowed within the Reserve.
- There are no rubbish bins. Visitors must take their rubbish with them.
- Pets are not allowed.

5.3 Working with the tourism industry

- Correct and appropriate messaging about Reserve values and Traditional Owner wishes will be given to workers.

5.4 Maintaining Reserve Character

- The Reserve's natural character and visual values will be protected, and places for development will be carefully considered and sustainably designed.

5.5 Accurate and appropriate Reserve messaging

- An Interpretive Plan will be prepared to make sure that all messages and ways of communicating information to visitors is of a high quality.

- The important messages and themes in the Reserve's interpretation include:

- Appropriate behaviour in the Reserve
- Gender restrictions & access
- Visitor orientation, including safety and preparedness.

5.6 Visitor safety standards

- Visitors can check the NTG Parks and Safety rules for all parks and reserves online before they visit the Reserve. Reserve specific safety rules can found on the 'Welcome to Kuyunba' interpretation sign at the start of the 700 metre visitor walking track.

5.7 Traditional Owner engagement and tourism cultural awareness

- In the Cultural Heritage Management Plan, the Partners will identify Aboriginal place names for areas and features within the Reserve. Wherever possible, signs will use Arrernte and English words.

6. BUSINESS OPERATIONS

6.1. Effective Operations

Parks and Wildlife is responsible for daily operations of the Reserve and financing and resourcing the Reserve's regular management programs, including administrative, staffing, infrastructure, and services. Operations are conducted by staff based in Alice Springs, with rangers from Arltunga Historical Reserve and Trephina Gorge Nature Park patrolling the Reserve a few times a year.

Overall management of the Reserve is guided by laws, policies and by the Partners. For proper management of the Reserve, and the safety of people and property, important by-laws and regulations are put in place and are properly enforced.

Most of the funding to manage the Reserve and develop services and facilities comes from the Northern Territory Government, and is shared between this Reserve and all other parks and reserves across the NT parks estate. The CLC also provides some funding for joint management activities.

6.1.1. Management Effectiveness Framework

The Management Effectiveness Framework informs priority, setting the resource allocation across the NT parks and reserves system. Part of the framework identifies how important each park or reserve is, compared to all parks. The importance of each park is assessed by looking at each park's contribution to biodiversity conservation, recreation and tourism. It does not try to compare cultural values across the park system. The framework puts parks of similar importance together in groups and describes general management standards to each group. The Reserve is ranked as a Class 3 (locally important) Biodiversity Park and a Class 4 Visitor Park (lowest priority).

The Reserve will be subject to a performance review that considers each part of cycle for providing funding and resources. The review records how well the Partners are working to achieve the aims in the Plan. This review supports clear and accountable reporting, helping the Partners to always improve Reserve management and show outcomes to the community.

6.2. Aboriginal Training, Work and Business Opportunities

Joint Management contributes towards economic, social and wellbeing benefits for Traditional Owners and their families. This is achieved through direct and indirect jobs and training in a diverse range of fields, sharing of revenue and community development programs.

Flexible, project-based employment gives many benefits including work experience, two-way learning and accredited training and helps build positive working relationships between Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife staff. It also helps young Traditional Owners become work-ready and helps local Aboriginal organisations to be ready to bid for contracts.

Most maintenance on the Reserve is carried out by Parks and Wildlife rangers. Sometimes contractors are used for specialised projects and services. Traditional Owners are keen to be involved in contract work. Traditional Owners, and the Aboriginal organisations that they support, will be preferred for contracts to provide services if they can show that they can meet contract requirements and understand and can meet the requirements of the relevant NT laws and policies.

The broader employment goals of Traditional Owners and their families cannot be met by joint management alone. Employment and training programs developed by the Partners will involve external groups and

organisations. This may include other government departments, Aboriginal ranger groups, commercial businesses, and other stakeholders.

The Northern Territory Government is working to increase recruitment and retention of Aboriginal people and to help to grow the career progression of Aboriginal employees. Parks and Wildlife will work hard to increase the employment of Aboriginal people, while respecting NT employment laws and policies. Traditional Owners employed as 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 Parks and Wildlife, schools, industry, education, and training providers.

6.3. Working with the Community

Reserve neighbours and the wider community are involved in the management of the Reserve and have a keen interest in how the Reserve will be managed. Successful Reserve management depends on many individuals and organisations (both private and public) committing to give resources to and protect the values of the Reserve. It is important for the Partners to work on growing positive relationships with the community.

The Partners will work with the local community to work together on land management across leases and neighbouring properties. Cooperative natural resource management will be encouraged with community ranger groups and neighbouring land-owners, including Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap and Owen Springs.

6.4. Research, Survey and Monitoring

Effective management is about review and continuous improvement. This requires good information about the Reserve values, visitor use, environmental trends, and effectiveness of management actions. Research on the Reserve is mostly done by staff from the Department of Environment, Parks, and Water Security.

Research conducted on the Reserve should have clear objectives and be included in operational programs. Traditional Owners have knowledge of the Reserve that may help research results. Traditional Owners have expressed that they are keen to be consulted and offer to help with research, survey and monitoring projects and where possible, be employed in this work.

Senior Traditional Owners may request to supervise 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.

Recording and checking visitor numbers, demographics, behaviour, and satisfaction levels will help to guide visitor management, including the planning and design of facilities. This information can also be useful to inform Traditional Owners interested in developing tourism businesses.

Traffic counters collect information on vehicle numbers and Parks and Wildlife will continue to collect visitor data. Visitor surveys report on visitor satisfaction, profile, and the use of the Reserve. Visitors will be surveyed by Parks and Wildlife, Tourism NT, or other interested parties as needed.

The success of both joint management and park management will be measured against the achievement of the aims of the Plan. At joint management meetings, progress toward the directions of the Plan will be looked at each year. This will determine whether the Plan needs revision or should continue as it is. Joint management will continue to be looked at and improved.

6.5. Regulated Activities and Permits

Permits issued under the TPWC Act are required for activities that involve special access or use of any part of the Reserve and for commercial purposes. This includes: research, public gatherings, commercial tourism, aircraft operation and commercial film and photography. Permits state the conditions under which an activity can operate to avoid negative impacts on the values of the Reserve and on other Reserve users.

“Got to respect, got to ask senior men”

The JMC is responsible for developing practical local policy and guidelines for the process of permit approvals. The Partners need to ensure permits are processed efficiently and consider the interests of Traditional Owners, the community, industry stakeholders and existing Parks and Wildlife policy.

The Partners will develop guidelines as new permit applications are submitted for consideration. Permit Approval Guidelines will specify whether or not Traditional Owners must be consulted regarding an activity. Some permits may require paid supervision by Traditional Owners and / or Parks and Wildlife staff. Until guidelines are established, the CLC will consult with Traditional Owners on permit applications that request any access or activity that would not normally be allowed to visitors.

“We say no to a rock art trail story at Kuyunba”

6.5.1. Tour Operator Permits

All commercial tourism operators visiting standard visitor areas within Northern Territory Parks and Reserves need a permit under the Parks and Wildlife Tour Operator Permit System. The Traditional Owners wish to be consulted about any kind of commercial activity and have expressed reservations about tours operating within the Reserve.

6.5.2. Promotion, Commercial Film and Photography

Although visitors are allowed within the Reserve, Traditional Owners do not want to promote the Reserve to tourists and the wider community. Therefore the Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife do not wish to allow for commercial use of information and images of the Reserve.

Traditional Owners have no objection to visitors taking non-commercial film or photography in areas where they have permission to visit, however they do not want photography of the rock art. They have stated that photos of wildlife, such as birds, is okay. Commercial film and photography is not encouraged. A permit must be granted in accordance with the TPWC Act and By-laws, Parks and Wildlife policy and the approval of the Partners for these activities to occur within the Reserve.

“No pictures [of the rock art]. We worry about pictures of the park. Symbols can be shared through interpretive signage, [but] we check. We say yes or no”

6.5.3. Research Permits

Research is encouraged, especially where the knowledge gained will improve management of the Reserve and the parks estate. Research proposals will be assessed in consultation with Traditional Owners and Parks and Wildlife staff. Researchers may also require additional permits under the TPWC Act such as a permit to interfere with, take or keep wildlife.

Research permits for archaeological work within the Reserve will include the stipulation that only male archaeologists and researchers are to access the Special Protection Zone for research purposes and any future publications about the Reserve must not reference Dreaming stories.

6.5.4. Development Proposals

All development proposals will be considered and reviewed against guidelines and conditions prepared by the Partners to ensure that there will be no negative impact on the Reserve's values. Where development proposals, leases or activities may cause environmental, heritage or cultural impacts, the proponent will have to show that the proposal complies with all relevant legislation. The proposal must be consistent with the terms of the ILUA, requires the informed consent of Traditional Owners and needs to follow the Parks and Wildlife policy on commercial tourism development. Significant developments may be subject to the *Environment Protection Act 2019* and the EPBC Act.

6.5.5. Protecting Sacred Sites

The ALRA gives legal recognition to areas that the 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 NT, is declared to be sacred to Aboriginals or of significance according to Aboriginal tradition". The ARLA makes it an offence to enter or remain on land that is a sacred site.

Complementary NT legislation, the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989*, also gives protection for all sites that fall within the scope of this definition. This protection is generally given 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 Owners have an enforceable right to say who enters their sacred sites, and what can or cannot happen on their sacred sites. Illegal entry, works on, or use of a sacred site without permission, is an offence under the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989*.

Strong joint management will make sure that sacred sites are protected in accordance with Traditional Owners' wishes. Under the ALRA, the CLC 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 helping joint management.

6.5.6. Protecting Heritage Places

The *Heritage Act 2011* (Heritage Act) gives protection and conservation to heritage places and objects. All Aboriginal or Macassan archaeological places and objects are automatically protected under the Heritage Act - this includes places and objects not previously recorded. Under the Heritage Act, approval is needed before any work is done on heritage places or objects. Under the Heritage Act, it is an offence to fail to notify the Northern Territory Heritage Branch of the discovery of a place or object that a person knows is an Aboriginal or Macassan archaeological place or object. In addition to these legislative provisions, Traditional Owners request that if any artefacts are uncovered, they are not disturbed and are immediately reported to the CLC.

6.5.7. Changes in Reserve Area

There are no further proposals to expand the Reserve in the immediate future. The Partners may consider co-operative arrangements for managing the Reserve and surrounding land together with neighbouring Aboriginal and pastoral landholders and nearby communities.

6.5.8. Community Living Areas

Community living areas are important for Aboriginal people to continue cultural practices and the natural and cultural resource management of the country. Joint management agreements support Traditional Owners to live on and near, parks and reserves.

Areas proposed for community living, leases or expansion of the Reserve 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.

During preparation of the Plan Traditional Owners expressed community living areas could be permitted on the Reserve. Costs incurred for living area development will be paid for by funding from other sources.

6.5.9. Mining

Territory legislation allows for mining in parks and reserves but requires the Minister for Mining and Industry to consider the views of the Partners prior to granting any mining interest. If the Minister for Mining and Industry decides to grant a mining interest, the Minister must include conditions recommended by the Partners for the appropriate protection of the environment. The Partners recognise that mining and extractive activities may have a negative impact on the Reserve's cultural and natural values. Mining is not consistent with the values of the Reserve. The Reserve was declared as Reserved Land (RL676) under the *Mineral Titles Act 2010* in 1979.

The entire Reserve is declared general reserved land (No. 1131, NTG S25 on 06/06/1985) under the *Mineral Titles Act 2010*, which prohibits exploration, extraction and mining.

There are a number of borrow pits within the Reserve, adjacent to Hatt Road, that are remnants of previous road works and are in varying stages of revegetation.

Business Operations Objectives

A better knowledge base helps to make better decisions for the Reserve that is well-managed with efficiently use resources and an engaged community.

Social, economic and employment benefits are realised by Traditional Owners and the wider community.

Management Directions

6.1 Management strategies and operational programs

- The Partners will prepare and implement Reserve management strategies, Annual Action Plans and maintain operational programs for the Reserve.

6.2 Day-to-day management

- Parks and Wildlife will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Reserve, under direction of the JMC.

6.3 Financing

- Parks and Wildlife will provide funding and resources for the Reserve's ongoing management including administrative functions, staff, infrastructure, and services. Opportunities to add more to the funding of Reserve operations and programs will be closely examined. Funding from other sources may be sought for some projects or programs.

6.4 Aboriginal employment and training

- Training and employment opportunities for Traditional Owners will be actively pursued by the Partners. Opportunities for direct and flexible jobs, contracts and training will be reviewed each year, together with Traditional Owners' interests and capacity. Agreed and achievable plans will be developed. Options to provide accredited training and business development support will be explored by the Partners by working with relevant government agencies, industry, and education and training providers.

Priorities for jobs and training include:

- Opportunities for paid participation of Traditional Owners in Reserve management programs
- On-the-job training and accredited activities carried out by training organisations
- Traditional Owners will be paid for specialist cultural advice and supervision when needed
- Parks and Wildlife will continue to offer opportunities for direct employment and training for Aboriginal people
- Local Aboriginal community-based rangers, community volunteers, and sponsored training and employment organisations will be encouraged and where possible, invited to assist with Reserve management
- Aboriginal rangers from other areas will be introduced to the JMC or delegated Traditional Owners before working on the Reserve.

6.5 Contract services

- Subject to the relevant laws of the Northern Territory, Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people, companies and organisations will be the preferred contract service providers where they can meet contract standards. Contractors who give training and employment to Traditional Owners and other local Aboriginal people will be regarded favourably.

6.6 Cultural advice

- Traditional Owners will be paid for specialist cultural advice and supervision consistent with Parks and Wildlife policy.

6.7 Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property

- Local Aboriginal 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 to by the CLC and Parks and Wildlife.

6.8 Regulated activities

- The JMC will develop Permit Approval Guidelines for the Reserve. Prior to guidelines being developed, the CLC will consult with Traditional Owners for access or activity permit applications that are outside of usual visitor activities.
- The TPWC By-laws and the Reserve's Permit Approval Guidelines will be used by the Permits Office and the JMC when assessing permit applications. The JMC will continue to refine the Permit Approval Guidelines over time.
- The assessment of permits, activities and proposals will consider the following:

- Delegated Parks and Wildlife 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 have 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.

The Partners, with assistance from the CLC, will decide if activities or proposals affecting a particular area of the Reserve need additional input such as from a specific Traditional Owner.

6.9 Research, survey, and monitoring

- Programs will be approved in operational strategies, subject to review each year. Participation and job opportunities for Traditional Owners in research, survey and monitoring projects will be maximised. Aboriginal knowledge components will be incorporated in project objectives and outcomes where appropriate.
- Research permits will only allow male researchers to access the Special Protection Zone (see Map 3 and Table 2) and there will be the stipulation that any publications about the Reserve must not reference Dreaming stories.
- Visitor monitoring will be undertaken as required.

6.10 Reserve performance review

- A performance review for the Reserve will be undertaken in 5 years based on the performance indicators (Appendix 2). A report will be produced that states the condition of the Reserve's key values and suggested changes to management.

6.11 Development approvals

- Proposals will require the informed consent of affected Traditional Owners, in line with appropriate assessment processes and policy and will be assessed in line with the scale of potential impact, consistent with Northern Territory and Commonwealth law.

6.12 Sacred site clearances

- The Partners will work together to see that sacred sites are properly protected, supported by the CLC and Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, as needed.
- The CLC will have primary responsibility for consulting Traditional Owners for all proposed work on the Reserve.

6.13 Archaeological and Heritage places works

- Works or disturbance to declared Heritage places and objects and prescribed Aboriginal Archaeological places and objects in the Reserve will require consultation and permissions in accordance with the Heritage Act. Sacred site clearances through the AAPA will also be sought for works on Archaeological sites on the Reserve.

6.14 Changing the Reserve area

- Proposals to change the Reserve area will be considered by the Partners through the JMC, Parks and Wildlife and Northern Territory Government.

6.15 Establishing new community living areas

- Proposals to create community living areas on the Reserve will be considered through the JMC.

6.16 Mining and exploration

- Mining applications will be addressed through the ALRA and s25 (AM) of the TPWC Act. Nothing limits the rights of Traditional Owners to gather ochre within the Reserve.

6.17 Community engagement

- The Partners will consult with neighbours, the tourism industry and community and recreational groups in planning and making decisions for the Reserve. These groups will be invited to work with the Partners in matters of mutual interest both inside and outside the Reserve boundary. This will include strategic planning, developing opportunities and resolving problems.

6.18 Dealing with proposals not in the Plan

- Proposals that are not addressed in the Plan will be first considered by the Partners through the JMC. Matters that may affect the interests of Traditional Owners will need the consent of affected Traditional Owners through a consultation process conducted by the CLC.

Appendix 1. Management Areas

The Reserve is managed for multiple purposes, including the protection of cultural values, nature conservation and visitor experiences. Different areas of the Reserve will be managed differently, usually with greater emphasis on one of these purposes.

Management areas are not intended as a basis for regulation of access nor development. The Reserve's Joint Management Committee will remain open to discussing future development opportunities within the Reserve. With consultation, management areas may be changed during the term of this Plan to allow improved protection of values and/or enhancement of visitor opportunities.

Map 3. Management Areas

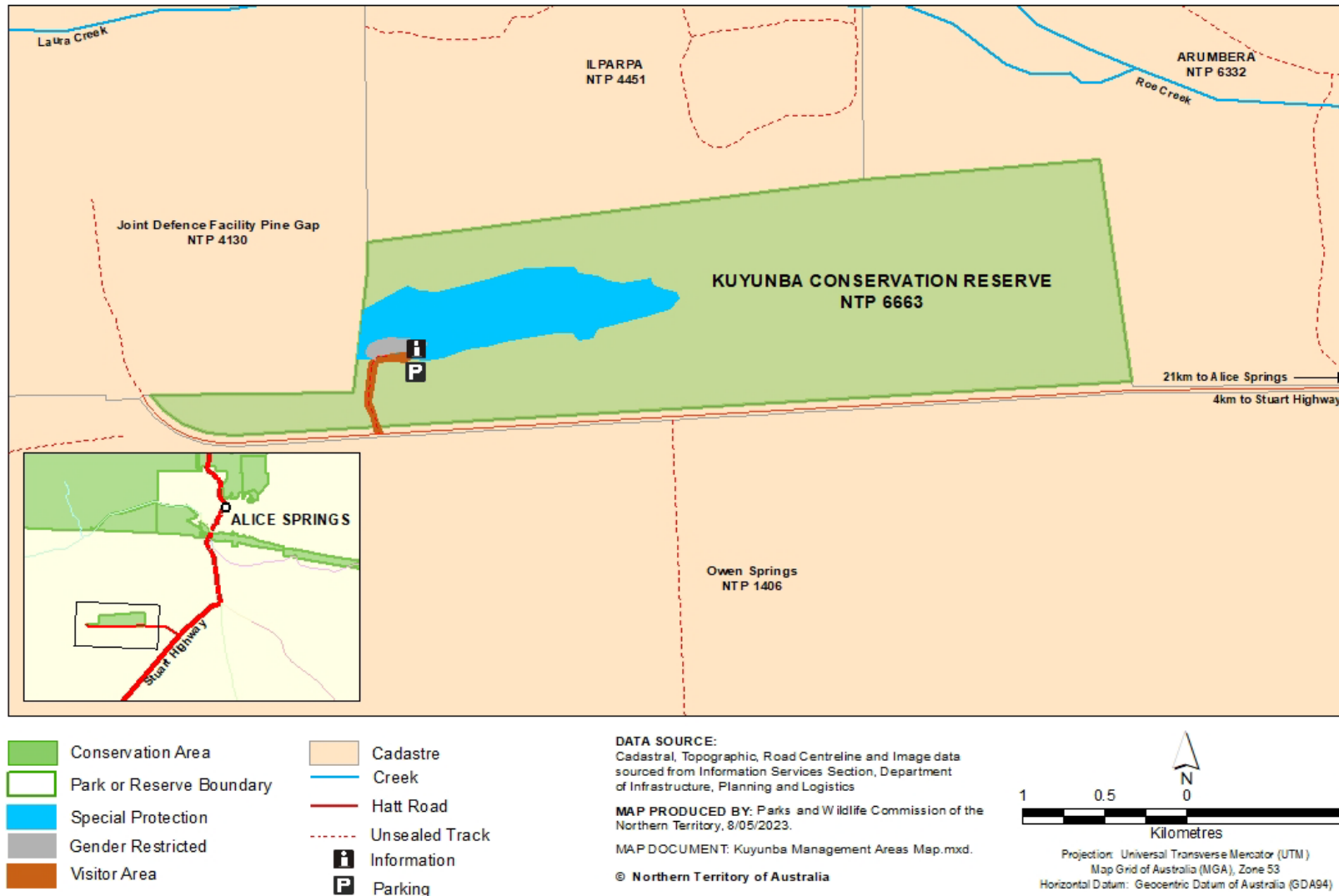


Table 2. Reserve Management Areas

Management Area	Purpose	Access	Visitor Activities	Facilities	Management Strategy
Special Protection	To protect significant cultural and natural values	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	Specific management of cultural and natural values as required
Gender Restricted	For men’s use only	Traditional Owner Men only	No visitor activity	Sign indicating no access / gender restricted zone	Specific management of cultural and natural values as required.
Conservation	To manage the vast majority of the park for the protection of natural and cultural features.	Permit approved commercial activities.	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.	Fire, Weed and Feral Animal management focussed on protecting cultural and natural values. Maintaining walking tracks, and four wheel drive tracks. Monitor visitor impacts on the natural values.
Visitor	To provide for low levels of visitor access	Formed gravel roads or unsealed tracks, mostly suitable for conventional vehicles. Access may be restricted at times due to road closures associated with neighbouring Joint Defence Facility requirements.	Bushwalking	Short walking track. Orientation information and interpretation provided at main visitor node. High standard but basic visitor facilities (reflecting the level and type of use)	Visitor management focused on maintaining facilities and visitor assets consistent with the Parks and Wildlife defined Levels of Service Fire, Weed and Feral Animal management focussed on public safety and asset protection.
Service	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 - gates.	Maintenance of management facilities and services

Appendix 2. Selected Performance Indicators

Performance indicators can help the 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 the Plan. When indicators are not achieved, the reasons will be acknowledged and steps taken to improve outcomes.

Table 3. Performance Indicators

Aims	Performance Indicators	Targets	Means
Governance			
Equitable management partnership with effective governance that makes well informed decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Partners are satisfied with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communication and Engagement - representation and decision-making processes - building capacity 	High	The Partners will be asked at annual joint management meetings Ongoing record-keeping, reporting and review
The Aims and Directions in the Plan are achieved with resources used effectively on agreed priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of Aims and Management Directions in the Plan • Implementation of strategies and annual operational plans 	Outcomes realised	The 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"> • New skills acquired by Traditional Owners • Number of days employed in Reserve programs • Number of contract opportunities created and taken up 	Increased	The Partners will be asked at annual joint management meetings Ongoing record-keeping, reporting and review

Aims	Performance Indicators	Targets	Means
Managing Country			
Traditional Owners satisfied with their involvement, fulfilment of their cultural responsibilities and protection of cultural sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Owner satisfaction 	High	Traditional Owners will be asked at annual joint management meetings
Aboriginal knowledge is incorporated into Reserve operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mutual understanding and Reserve operation capability Traditional Owner satisfaction 	Increased High	The Partners will be asked at annual joint management meetings
No significant wildfires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area burnt in fire-tolerant vegetation Area burnt in fire-sensitive vegetation 	greater than (>) 5% each year less than (<) 10% over 10 years in total	Fire mapping, ongoing data management and review
No large introduced herbivores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of large introduced herbivores Existing boundary fence maintained 	Low Stock proof	Opportunistic sightings and occasional aerial surveys
Managing Visitors			
Visitors enjoy themselves, are safe and highly satisfied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor satisfaction Number of safety related incidents 	High Low	Occasional visitor satisfaction monitoring Ongoing reporting