

NT PARKS MASTERPLAN 2023-53



Department of
ENVIRONMENT, PARKS AND WATER SECURITY

Southern Rockhole,
Nitmiluk National Park





MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Our parks and reserves are highly valued places for Territorians to relax and enjoy and they are a major destination for visitors to experience the best of the Territory's natural and cultural heritage.

The Masterplan provides a strategic framework to guide future programs, projects and partnerships that will conserve the natural environment, maintain cultural values and provide opportunities for new and enhanced visitor experiences.

Informed by wide ranging community and stakeholder views, the 30 year Masterplan is an exciting initiative as for the first time, the Parks and Wildlife Commission and its partners will be working to deliver measurable targets for the short, medium and long term. The plan will balance the role of Parks to deliver new Tourism infrastructure, maintaining the great outdoor lifestyle of Territorians, supporting Aboriginal economic development, while protecting biodiversity and cultural values.

Nine key themes have been identified to guide the effort and resourcing of the parks estate for the next 30 years:

- Natural Biodiversity Values
- Living Cultural Values and Heritage
- Joint Management in Partnership with Traditional Owners
- Tourism
- Recreational Futures
- Aboriginal Economic Development
- Partnerships
- Growing the Estate
- Park Access

From the red deserts and mountain ranges of the centre, to the rainforests, wetlands and tropical seas of the north, the future of Territory parks and reserves is a shared vision. We look forward to continue working together to ensure our parks are protected well into the future.

Hon Nicole Manison MLA
Minister for Parks and Rangers

CONTENTS

Minister's Message	2
Introduction	5
Background	6
Our Approach	10
Natural Biodiversity Values	13
Living Cultural Values and Heritage	18
Joint Management in Partnership with Traditional Owners	21
Tourism	27
Recreational Futures	31
Aboriginal Economic Development	35
Partnerships	38
Growing the Estate	42
Park Access	46
References and Acronyms	50
ATTACHMENT A: The Northern Territory Parks 10 Year Activation Plan	

Published by the Northern Territory Government

ISBN 978-0-6457652-0-5

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and elders past, present and emerging on all the lands and seas that the Parks and Wildlife Commission manages and works on across the Northern Territory and recognise the deep and intact cultural connection that Aboriginal Territorians have with their country.

We are committed to working respectfully with Aboriginal Territorians and give particular acknowledgment to their use, knowledge and custodianship of the Northern Territory's natural values, including native plants and animals, within our parks and reserves over countless generations. We support Aboriginal Territorians and their aspirations to maintain, protect and manage their culture, language, land and sea country and heritage.





“

Natural values are all of the varieties of life (biodiversity) and natural resources within our parks and reserves, including the land, geology, water, ecosystems and species.



INTRODUCTION

The Northern Territory's parks and reserves are vital to the Territory's future.

From the red deserts and mountain ranges of the centre, to the rainforests, wetlands and tropical seas of the north, the Northern Territory is a vast and remarkable landscape. Distinguished from many other parts of Australia by its immensity, sparse population and seemingly unchanged landscapes, the Territory contains a fascinating array of plants and animals, and a vigorous and connected Aboriginal culture unlike that found elsewhere in Australia.

The natural environment is an integral part of life in the Territory. Most Territorians participate in a modern economy but live within an immense and remote landscape. The Territory accounts for around 17.5 per cent of Australia's total land mass, but contains just 1 per cent of Australia's population. When picturing home, most Territorians have images of nature – of the ranges and woodlands, of wild rivers, gorges and camping, and of the palms and desert oaks. For Aboriginal people, who through their ancestral estates managed and originally shaped the Territory landscape, a rich and layered involvement with the natural world has resulted in a deeply spiritual connection. This connection is reflected in an intricate belief system and is given concrete expression in ancient art forms that have fascinated people all over the world.

We have an opportunity to ensure the diversity and integrity of the Territory's natural and cultural heritage remains intact, both now and for future generations. The Masterplan acknowledges this opportunity and paves a way forward which involves government and the community working together and sharing responsibility for the management and conservation of our distinctive open spaces, remote landscapes and cultural treasures.

Parks and reserves contribute enormously to the social, cultural and economic fabric of the Territory and to its future.

The Masterplan provides long-term certainty and purpose to park management, along with improved certainty for Traditional Owners, Territorians and potential investors. While protection of natural and cultural values must remain the primary purpose of a parks estate, balancing the application of recreational and tourism opportunities is also the job of a park manager. We must find more innovative ways to facilitate increased activity on parks and reserves without compromising core values.

Most importantly, the Masterplan sets long term targets. Protected area managers must think in terms of managing parks in perpetuity since reactive, short term planning and decision making do not provide for long term or sustained outcomes. Developing strategies and targets while considering perpetual management is an important way of committing to and acknowledging the enduring nature of our parks and reserves.



BACKGROUND

PARKS AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

Encompassing 50,600.02 square kilometres (5,060,002 hectares) of land, coastal and marine protected areas, the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory (Parks and Wildlife) manages a network of some of the best examples of nature, culture and history across the Territory.

Eighty-three terrestrial parks and reserves and two marine parks are contained within the parks estate, accounting for 3.75 per cent of the Northern Territory's total land area. The *Parks and Wildlife Commission Act 1980* provides for the establishment and maintenance of parks, reserves and other land to encourage the protection, conservation and sustainable use of wildlife. Parks and Wildlife does not own any land and ownership is varied. Depending on the park, ownership may rest with Traditional Owners, the Conservation Land Corporation of the Northern Territory, the Northern Territory Land Corporation or the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (Crown Land).

Territory parks and reserves are managed by Parks and Wildlife in accordance with the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976 (TPWCA)*, Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation By-Laws 1984, Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Regulations 2001, the *Parks and Wildlife Commission Act 1980* and the *Parks and Reserves (Framework for the Future) Act 2003*. Some parks have their own legislation which guides their management, for example Nitmiluk National Park.

Parks and Wildlife is dedicated to conserving the natural and cultural values of these parks and reserves, undertaking activities including fire management, feral animal and weed control, and conservation founded on science and ingenuity. It is also committed to presenting parks and reserves for high-quality nature and culture based tourism and for recreation to ensure the Territory remains a 'must see' and 'must return to' destination.

Parks and Wildlife has a long history in the Territory and is recognised as a valued and trusted face of the Northern Territory Government (NTG) in regional communities and an important resource in times of emergency. Providing for effective visitor and public safety, Parks and Wildlife is responsible for community engagement activities and managing dangerous and problematic wildlife, particularly saltwater crocodiles. It also manages

“

Cultural values include Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage, objects, artefacts, buildings, places and monuments, along with living cultural connection, knowledge, expression and meaning of land, ecosystems and species.

The majestic view of Tolmer Falls,
Litchfield National Park

the regulation of wildlife to ensure that our native animals and plants are protected for future generations.

JOINT MANAGEMENT

Parks and Wildlife work together with Traditional Owners to achieve shared goals and aspirations. 33 of the Territory's terrestrial parks are jointly managed with Traditional Owners.

The *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976* governs all land managed under joint management arrangements unless separate legislation has been enacted as is the case for Nitmiluk National Park (*Nitmiluk [Katherine Gorge] National Park Act 1989*) and Garig Gunak Barlu National Park (*Cobourg Peninsula Aboriginal Land, Sanctuary and Marine Park Act 1981*). Joint management is also guided by lease agreements, Indigenous Land Use Agreements and Joint Management Plans. Land Councils support joint management of parks and reserves by representing and protecting the interests of Traditional Owners in relation to a jointly managed park.

The primary aim and principles of joint management are:

- Empowering Traditional Owners and equity in decisions about their land
- Developing employment and economic opportunities for Traditional Owners
- Improving cultural experiences for park visitors and contributing to meeting tourism industry demand for more cultural tourism experiences
- Combining Aboriginal knowledge and western scientific knowledge in conservation management.

CLIMATE CHANGE FUTURES

The resilience of the parks estate depends on our ability to take an honest look at what the future holds, considering the current impacts of climate change and those that are predicted in the near future.

The landscapes, habitats and sacred sites that are highly valued and our relationships to these places have been, and will continue to be, impacted.

Park visitation is likely to increase as temperatures

rise and natural environments offer respite from the increasingly harsh urban landscapes.

Parks and Wildlife has a key role in protecting the natural and cultural assets valued by Aboriginal people who are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Aboriginal knowledge will be a fundamental aspect of preparing for a future that promises to have increased instances of extreme heat, extreme weather events and concerns about water security.

Tourism futures will adapt to many changes such as travellers avoiding high greenhouse gas emitting tourism products, lodgings and experiences.

Commercial and privately owned electric vehicles plus electric transportation for travellers such as electric scooters, bikes and boats, will be commonplace and a network of fast charging stations will be required across the NT.

Tour operators will be carbon neutral, decarbonising and offsetting residual emissions. Lodgings providing relief from extreme heat will be located in and nearby parks and reserves.

Park experiences including swimming and walking will shift to the early morning, evening and night time. Water security and the provision of potable water will be a major factor in park management.

Parks and Wildlife has a responsibility to safeguard the parks estate by making decisions now that can prepare us for the future. Parks and Wildlife will prioritise partnerships with commercial operators that can demonstrate an appreciation for low-impact and sustainable tourism by:

- depending on environmentally friendly infrastructure and transport
- educating visitors on conservation values and the irreplaceable nature of our cultural assets
- focusing on visitor safety by preparing for risks and issues that are present as a result of climate change.

Parks and Wildlife Snapshot

As of 30 June 2022



3.76
million
visitors



92%
visitor
satisfaction



207 tourism
experiences
operating in
Territory parks
and reserves.

29

parks and reserves covered by
Statutory Management Plans.



33

joint management parks covering
2,833,671 ha.



220

crocodiles
removed
from the
Top End
waterways.



54

Be Crocwise
presentations
to more than
3,438
participants.

6,178 feral animals removed and **8,033 L**
of herbicide used to treat **9,200 ha** of weeds.





135
rangers & **26**
ranger stations.

70
Junior Ranger
programs
delivered to
1,101
young
Territorians.

39 community
engagement
events attracting
more than

1,138
participants.



28
community events
attracting more than
791 people.



159
campgrounds.



110
day use areas.



143
toilets.



1,644 km
of public access
4WD tracks.



144 km
of mountain
biking trails.



764 km
of walking tracks,
including

433 km
of shorter walks
and paths

331 km
of multi-day
walking trails.



4,257
native plants
on park.



38
threatened native
plants on park.



1,312
native animals
on park.



73
threatened native
animals on park.



296 prescribed burns managing a
total area of **1,179,977 ha.**



200 km
of fence line
repaired.

Volunteer programs contributed **14,106** hours to weed control,
pruning, fire breaks, rubbish removal and general maintenance.





OUR APPROACH

The Masterplan for Northern Territory parks and reserves outlines the strategic objectives for management to 2053 through nine key themes.



NATURAL BIODIVERSITY VALUES



LIVING CULTURAL VALUES AND HERITAGE



JOINT MANAGEMENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TRADITIONAL OWNERS



TOURISM



RECREATIONAL FUTURES



ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



PARTNERSHIPS



GROWING THE ESTATE



PARK ACCESS

OUR VISION

A resilient and secure system of parks conserving the diversity of the Territory's unique natural, recreational and cultural values managed together with Aboriginal people, creating prosperity for our joint management partners and ensuring a lasting legacy for future generations to experience, understand and enjoy.

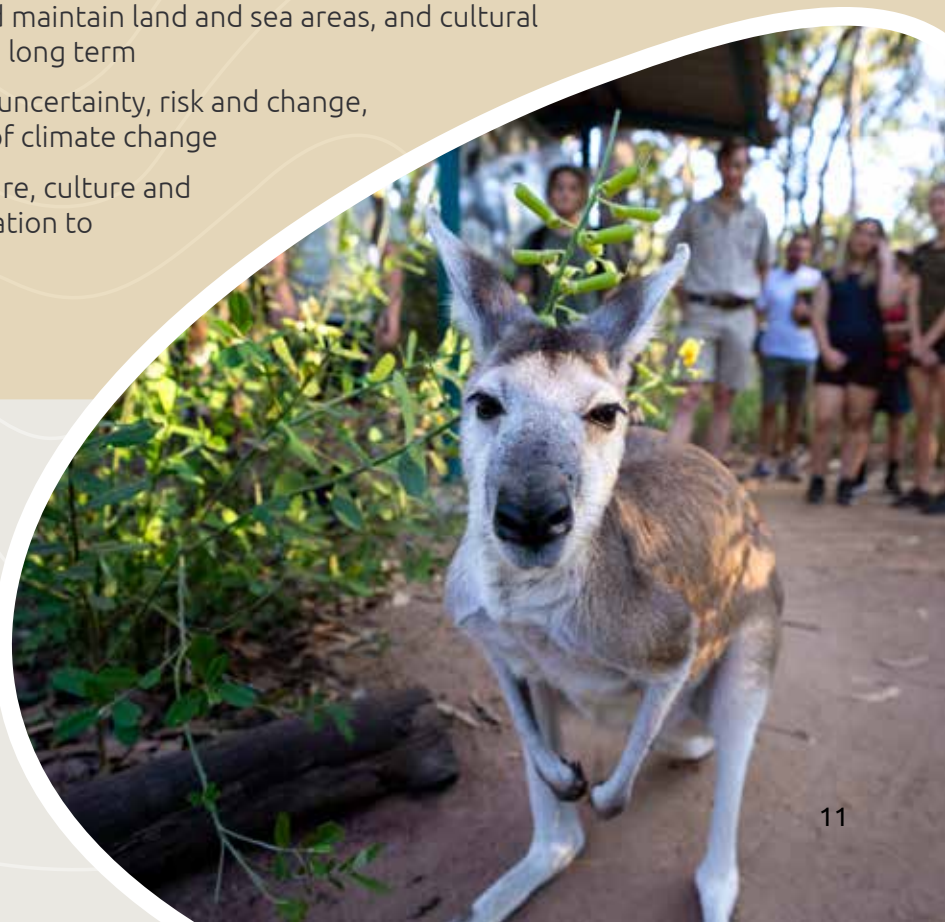


OUR PRINCIPLES

Our principles will help to guide Parks and Wildlife in its day to day decisions and actions through the delivery of the Masterplan.

In everything we do, we will be:

- Protecting nature and culture and presenting inspirational, educational, and recreational opportunities to grow public appreciation and enhanced connection with our parks and reserves
- Working with the community and commercial partners to maximise conservation, enjoyment, understanding, sustainable use, economic opportunities and health outcomes for Territorians and for visitors from elsewhere
- Respecting Aboriginal people's connection to country and working together equally with our joint management partners, Native Title holders and custodians to apply 'two way' knowledge to protect and maintain land and sea areas, and cultural heritage across the Territory for the long term
- Managing adaptively to respond to uncertainty, risk and change, including planning for the impacts of climate change
- Recognising the importance of nature, culture and adventure based tourism and recreation to Territorians and international and interstate visitors.



MASTERPLAN REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the Masterplan is important in keeping track of progress and reporting back to our partners and stakeholders regarding the achievements on parks and reserves. A Masterplan steering group will be established across government to ensure that the targets are regularly reviewed and progress is monitored and reported.

Parks and Wildlife will undertake to co-design five year action plans to map out the timely delivery of targets. During the development of action plans, progress against targets will be reviewed and reported publicly. The details of this process will be outlined in a monitoring and review schedule to be developed and made publicly available in the first year after the Masterplan commences.

An overarching independent evaluation and review of the Masterplan will also be undertaken every five years to ensure that targets are delivering on the goals of the plan and that the strategic direction of the plan remains relevant to joint management partners and stakeholders. This evaluation and review will be overseen through the regional governance arrangements that are outlined in the joint management theme of this document and will involve other stakeholders where appropriate.

THE 10 YEAR ACTIVATION PLAN

An important part of this masterplanning process was to develop the 10 Year Activation Plan to outline the priority infrastructure works that are planned to support the goals of the Masterplan.

The priorities of the 10 Year Activation Plan have been developed from what we already know about our infrastructure priorities and where we have engagement from Traditional Owners on joint managed parks and reserves.

New ideas will require negotiation and agreement from Traditional Owners, custodians and Native Title holders and therefore it would be inappropriate to list them at this time. For this reason the list of projects does not comprehensively address all priorities and actions of this Masterplan.

It is also for this reason that the Activation Plan has a much shorter review period of every three years, to allow the priorities and list of projects to grow quickly as the Masterplan begins to take effect and we are able to have more conversations with our partners and stakeholders.





Natural Biodiversity Values

OUR GOALS

- The Territory parks estate will be passed to future generations with its biological diversity intact, expanded and improved.
- Territory parks and reserves have adequate resilience to sustain healthy species and ecosystems in a climate change world.
- Management of biodiversity values is informed by Aboriginal knowledge of natural systems and applies adaptive management and protection through monitoring and strategic research.



Joe Creek Walk,
Judbarra / Gregory National Park



Biological diversity describes the variety of animals and plants in nature.

It includes diversity within and between species, and within ecosystems. The Territory’s parks estate is large, representing and protecting an extraordinary range of biodiversity values and ecosystems. Represented within the parks estate are coral reefs, mangroves, tropical savannas and sandstone country in the north through to red sands, mountain ranges and gorges in the arid region of Central Australia. The Northern Territory has cleared less than 1 per cent of its total landmass and does not have the same levels of habitat fragmentation as has been the case in the rest of Australia.

It should be noted however that the small percentage of cleared land perhaps understates the widespread ecosystem change we are witnessing, as evidenced by small mammal decline. Nevertheless, Territory parks and reserves are an important asset for biodiversity conservation, and their management to a high standard can help reduce threats such as inappropriate fire regimes, weeds, and feral animal incursion.

Public feedback regarding Parks and Wildlife’s role in biodiversity management is very clear. The NTG should remain a leader in protected area management, especially in biodiversity conservation.

Park managers are expected to identify and manage threats to biodiversity values and this is recognised through clear public views regarding the primary goal for biodiversity management on the parks estate. There is also strong recognition of landscape threats such as feral animals, weeds, changing fire regimes and climate change, as current and ongoing challenges to park and reserve values. Public opinion has indicated that the resources made available to manage or reduce these threats have been insufficient.

Protected area managers in the Northern Territory are fortunate in that the connection between Aboriginal people and their land and sea country remains strong. Traditional Owners have an essential role in sustaining natural biodiversity values within the parks estate. Aboriginal knowledge and management practices continue and have direct relevance to contemporary management programs as we seek to retain the landscape in a condition that was maintained by thousands of years of Aboriginal land management practices. ‘Two way’ management (combining Aboriginal and western understanding of biodiversity management) will be essential to protect biodiversity and mitigate threatening processes.

The Territory's parks estate spans three climatic and landscape patterns - Top End, Savannah Gulf and Central Australia.

Top End parks and reserves are dominated by woodland and open forest with small pockets of grassland and monsoon forest, extensive mangrove-lined coasts, wetlands, rivers and floodplains. This landscape has been shaped by fire and its strong annual wet and dry seasons. Coastal reserves and marine parks support beaches and coral reefs. South of the Top End, the transition from tropical to semi-arid is marked by vast woodlands with spectacular sandstone features.

Savannah Gulf parks and reserves encompass vast open woodlands and sheer escarpments. In the Gulf of Carpentaria the estate includes examples of coastal mangroves and extensive sea-grass beds. Further to the south, the habitat changes to semi-arid savanna with Mitchell Grass Plains, largely unrepresented in the parks estate.

Central Australian parks and reserves are characterised by rugged ranges, gorges, woodlands, desert, rivers, rock-holes, spinifex grasslands and sand country. The climate varies greatly during the year, with temperatures reaching above 40 degrees in summer, down to below zero degrees in winter. Rainfall varies from year to year, with 'extreme' rainfall events between long dry periods.

Many of the wildlife species and other values found in Territory parks and reserves are not found elsewhere in Australia (endemic) and maintaining these natural values in parks is a key function of Parks and Wildlife.

Park managers and Traditional Owners will need to prepare for significant challenges and change. Modelling suggests the impacts of climate change will be observed well within the timespan of this Masterplan. Better knowledge and adaptive management will become crucial for addressing the implications of climate change and other emerging threats.

To be able to identify and respond to threats as they arise, park managers will need capability to monitor the biodiversity health of the parks estate, have an increased understanding of how our natural systems work, along with likely tipping points in ecosystem function.

This will provide managers with forewarning of possible ecosystem and species declines, and / or extinctions, and identify triggers for management intervention.

To address knowledge gaps, collaboration with universities, non-government organisations, Traditional Owners, industry and the wider community will become more important. Priorities include better understanding of climate impacts, improving our understanding of key ecological processes, and testing new and emerging technologies in fire, weed, feral animal and sea country management.

Ecosystem services are an emerging industry, with the potential to provide long-term stable resourcing. Ecosystem services include biodiversity and carbon offsets, such as blue carbon and savanna burning programs. In savanna burning programs, land managers are able to produce and sell carbon offsets as carbon emissions are abated and it potentially rewards them for limiting the total area burned. Blue carbon initiatives recognise the integral role of protecting coastal ecosystems, particularly seagrass beds and mangroves in sequestering and storing carbon from the atmosphere and oceans. Over the life of this Masterplan, new opportunities to enhance management effectiveness by providing ecosystem services should be explored as the industry evolves. These kinds of initiatives that are not covered by existing leases, Indigenous Land Use Agreements or other arrangements on joint management parks and reserves will require negotiation and agreement from Traditional Owners.



Protected area managers in the Northern Territory are fortunate in that the connection between Aboriginal people and their land and sea country remains strong. Traditional Owners have an essential role in sustaining natural biodiversity values within the parks estate.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Maintain and improve biodiversity management

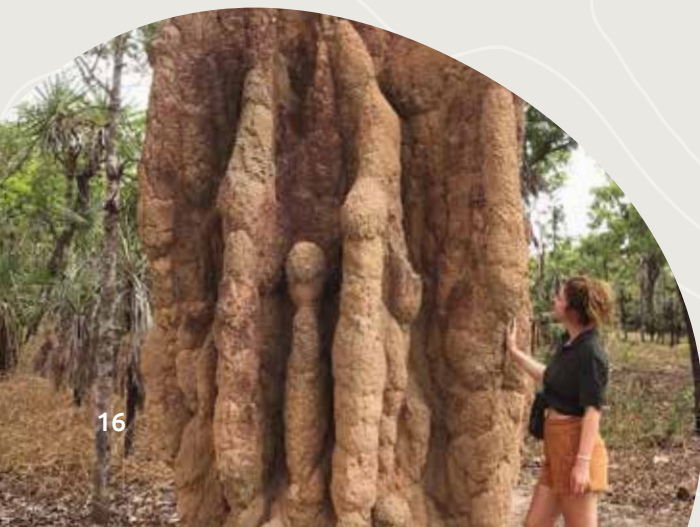
- Apply revenue models that will secure long term stable resourcing and funding for the operation of the parks estate, including new arrangements such as ecosystem services, and biodiversity and carbon offsets programs.
- Increase operational support for rangers to manage fire, weeds and feral animals, including establishing a fee for service workforce, including Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Land and Sea Rangers that can be employed on a seasonal basis. This includes establishing mobile teams to lead, coordinate and implement natural resource operations across the Northern Territory.
- Establish and maintain a Management Effectiveness Framework that aligns with the Parks Classification System to allocate appropriate levels of service and performance standards for park management.
- Together with our partners develop habitat condition targets and other meaningful measures of success for biodiversity conservation for each park and reserve.
- Publicly report on management effectiveness of the parks estate at no less than five year intervals.
- Develop Plans of Management (10 year), Integrated Country Strategies (5 year) and Annual Action Plans (1 year) for all parks and reserves, integrating Aboriginal, scientific and local knowledge with Traditional Owners as active participants for jointly managed parks.
- Strengthen legislative and policy provisions for the protection of essential habitat identified through biodiversity assessments and potential development pressure and habitat change.

Build resilience in species and ecosystems

- Work with key stakeholders and Traditional Owners to establish a research program that supports planning and improves management, with a particular focus on the impacts of climate change to inform habitat targets and plans of management.
- Continue to support and improve natural resource management aimed at addressing threats to species and ecosystems.
- Seek landscape-scale partnerships to address threats and ecosystem connectivity issues so that species and ecosystems can build resilience as climatic patterns shift.
- Identify natural system thresholds or tipping points that may call for an immediate change in management practices or significant management intervention.
- Prioritise management and planning to ensure the security of essential habitat for threatened species and ecosystems that only occur within the parks estate.
- Develop a Climate Change Strategy for the parks estate that addresses management responses to likely impacts.

Apply 'two way' knowledge to inform adaptive management through monitoring and strategic research.

- Establish and maintain a 'two way' approach to conservation management, integrating Aboriginal knowledge and western science.
- Establish a platform for regular dialogue between rangers, Traditional Owners, park user groups and other key stakeholders to review management performance and identify options for improving natural and cultural outcomes.
- Ensure that rangers spend time on country with Traditional Owners working together on managing and understanding natural and cultural values.
- Establish a Territory parks estate research prospectus that supports evidence-based management and identifies opportunities for citizen science to fill priority knowledge gaps and build community stewardship.



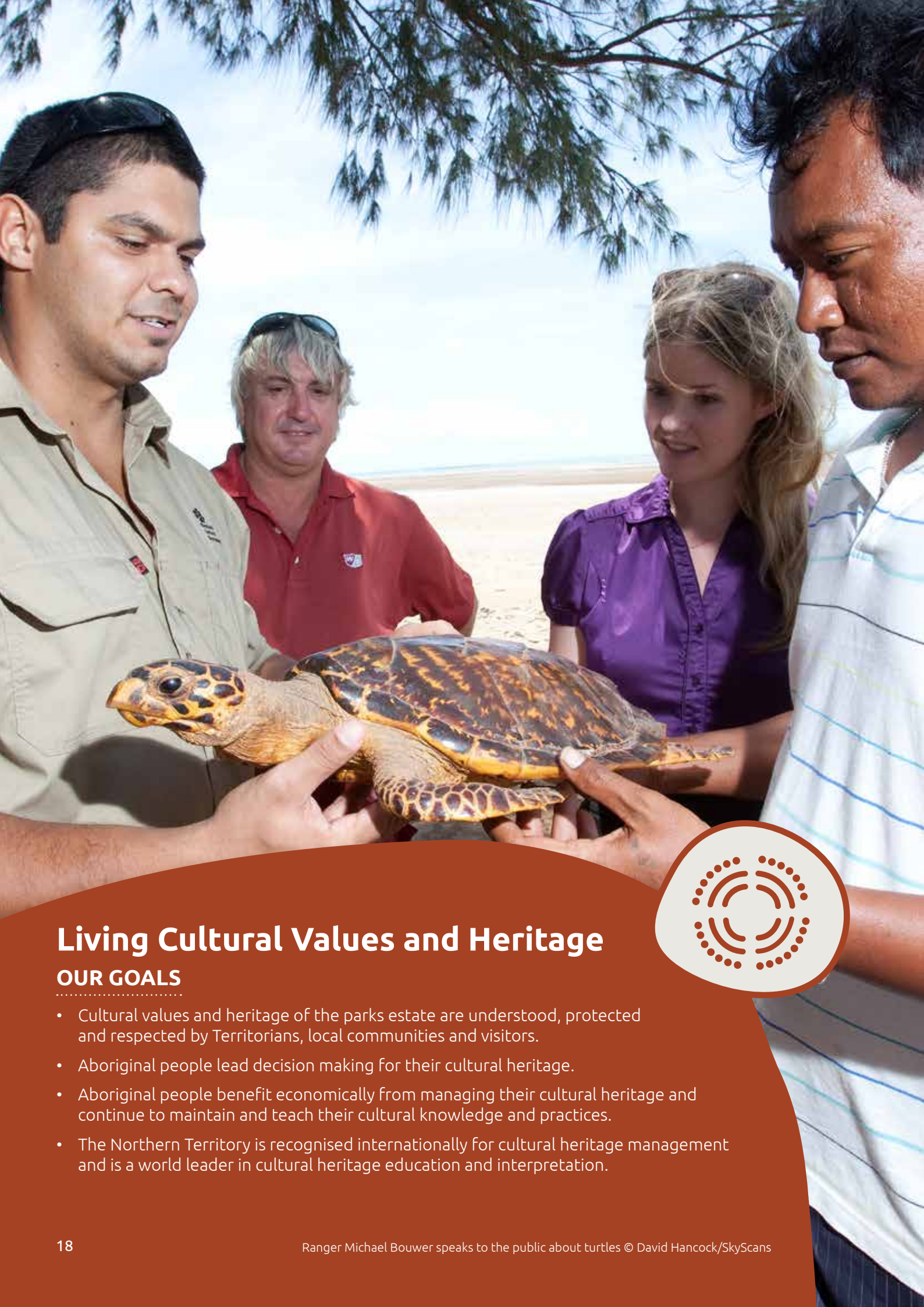
Left:
Termite mound, Litchfield National Park

TARGETS

Theme: Natural Biodiversity Values

- By 2024, the Management Effectiveness Framework has been reviewed and is being implemented.
- By 2025, a Climate Change Strategy for Parks and Wildlife has been completed.
- By 2026, a biodiversity baseline assessment is complete for all parks and reserves benchmarking measures of natural biodiversity to evaluate change.
- By 2027, a systematic program of monitoring, evaluation, reporting and improvement is co-designed and formalised for all parks and reserves to evaluate change in natural biodiversity, cultural values, habitat condition targets, threatening processes and management effectiveness.
- By 2028, a Parks and Wildlife Park Classification System for protection and levels of service is implemented.
- By 2029, all parks and reserves have plans and management statements according to their class of protection and level of service.
- By 2030, 75 per cent of all parks and reserves meet habitat condition targets for fire, weed and feral animal management.
- By 2040, the trajectory of threatened species decline has stabilised and improved within the parks estate.
- By 2053, there are zero extinctions of native wildlife within the parks estate.





Living Cultural Values and Heritage

OUR GOALS

- Cultural values and heritage of the parks estate are understood, protected and respected by Territorians, local communities and visitors.
- Aboriginal people lead decision making for their cultural heritage.
- Aboriginal people benefit economically from managing their cultural heritage and continue to maintain and teach their cultural knowledge and practices.
- The Northern Territory is recognised internationally for cultural heritage management and is a world leader in cultural heritage education and interpretation.

The Northern Territory has a rich and diverse history with significant sites, places and objects of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage. We are in a fortunate position that many Aboriginal Territorians retain their knowledge, connection and responsibility for their country.

Many heritage places on our parks and reserves are associated with significant events, including World War II, the gold rush, visits by the Macassan people and the early settlement and colonisation of lands by European people.

Stewardship of cultural heritage within the parks estate requires strong partnerships and collaboration between all stakeholders for the benefit of present and future generations.

Built heritage requires careful prioritisation in partnership with the NT Heritage Branch to ascertain which sites should continue to be preserved.

The opportunity exists to lead cultural heritage education and interpretation in partnership with the holders of this knowledge. Aboriginal people must be empowered to lead decision making, benefit economically and be provided opportunities to pass their cultural knowledge on to younger generations.

By actively working with Traditional Owners, we can better understand the cultural values of the parks estate, the management needs, and develop culturally sensitive and appropriate ways to assist with collection, preservation and sharing of this invaluable historic information.

Appropriate collection and recording of shared Aboriginal cultural heritage will assure preservation of the information so it can be drawn from in the future.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Protect and respect cultural heritage values and sacred sites

- Build capacity and processes to increase engagement between Parks and Wildlife, Traditional Owners and site custodians that supports conservation and protection of cultural values, including significant and registered sacred sites.
- Recognise that in managing their sites, Traditional Owners and Aboriginal custodians take the lead in all processes and decisions.
- Together with Traditional Owners and representative organisations, develop a Cultural Heritage Information Management System for the collation and storage of all cultural data,

including verbal history and language as agreed by custodians, with inbuilt mechanisms to withdraw shared knowledge and practices by knowledge holders and custodians as required.

- Develop appropriate governance policies, procedures and practices for the management of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage. This will include cultural protocols and toolkits, co-designed with free, prior and informed consent.
- Partner with Traditional Owners and representative organisations to develop cultural management plans for managing living cultural values and both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage for relevant parks and reserves. Each cultural management plan will consider:
 - Mapping of cultural values and sites, including Aboriginal sacred sites, and an audit of cultural heritage under the care of Parks and Wildlife.
 - Prioritising significant and sacred sites and enhancing their protection.
 - Recording the names of significant features within the landscape, including their meaning, and with permission, ensure records are entered into the NT Place Names Register.
 - Protection and preservation of cultural sites including sacred sites from the impacts of increased visitation using modern preservation standards.
- Work with the NT Heritage Branch to identify and prioritise which built heritage sites should continue to be preserved.
- Allocate increased resources to manage cultural sites.

Assist Aboriginal people in managing their cultural heritage and foster economic development

- As led by Aboriginal people, engage custodians, Aboriginal Land and Sea Ranger groups and organisations in the implementation of cultural management programs through partnerships and fee for service arrangements.
- In partnership with Traditional Owners and custodians, develop a list of culturally based economic opportunities for Aboriginal people across parks and reserves in collaboration with stakeholders, universities and specialists.
- Support Aboriginal people to maintain and teach traditional cultural knowledge and practices to the next generation through programs such as learning on country.

- Support Traditional Owners and Land Councils as they further explore aspirations to establish exclusive use areas where Traditional Owners can live and work on the parks estate.
 - Develop interpretive materials that connect historical stories from more than one perspective, facilitating an appreciation for, and empathy with, other lived experiences.
- Strive for excellence in cultural heritage management, education and interpretation**
- In partnership with site custodians, Traditional Owners and other stakeholders, develop a Rock Art Trail across the parks estate that is interpreted by site custodians.
 - With Traditional Owner permission, provide traditional place names and, where appropriate, their meaning on park signs and information.
 - Integrate innovative digital technologies into cultural heritage interpretation, including the use of QR codes on signs to link with cultural information.
 - Develop a Heritage Trail for joint heritage sites with new sites and interpretation across the parks estate.

TARGETS

Theme: Living Cultural Values and Heritage

- By 2026, develop a Cultural Heritage Information Management System for the collation and storage of all cultural data, including verbal history and language as agreed by custodians, with inbuilt mechanisms to withdraw shared knowledge and practices by knowledge holders and custodians as required.
- By 2026, country camps will be held annually in jointly managed parks and reserves, in part to facilitate the intergenerational transfer of cultural knowledge.
- By 2028, cultural management plans for managing living cultural values and heritage have been developed for relevant parks and reserves.
- By 2028, parks and places have Aboriginal names where agreed.
- By 2028, customised cultural protocols are developed and implemented across the parks estate
- By 2029, a minimum of five new cultural tourism opportunities across the Territory are being facilitated for Aboriginal people where desired.
- By 2030, through partnerships with Traditional Owners and site custodians, Parks and Wildlife understands the cultural values of the parks estate and their management needs, and is actively working with Traditional Owners and site custodians to conserve and protect them.
- By 2034, Rock Art Trails have been developed across the parks estate in consultation with Traditional Owners and custodians.
- By 2035, five additional rock art sites offer appropriate cultural tourism, education and interpretation as cultural economic opportunities where desired by Aboriginal custodians.
- By 2040, a Heritage Trail featuring joint heritage sites, including sites from WWII and geoheritage places, has been developed across the parks estate.
- By 2053, Aboriginal people are actively involved in the holistic management of key cultural sites across the parks estate.



Joint Management in Partnership with Traditional Owners

OUR GOALS



- Robust strategies developed with Traditional Owners regarding long term futures for joint management that provide institutional and regulatory support for the aspirations of Aboriginal land owners.
- Strong relationships between confident joint management partners with increased opportunities to meet and work together on country and enable better 'two way' management of country.
- Appropriate regional governance arrangements that strengthen Traditional Owners' decision making and better enable direct communication between Traditional Owners, Parks and Wildlife and the elected representatives of the government of the day.
- Adequate resourcing available to jointly managed parks from multiple funding streams to provide for meaningful economic development opportunities, genuine involvement for Traditional Owners in park management and best practice land and sea country management.



Aboriginal people have long held cultural and traditional responsibilities to protect and manage their land and sea country.

Many key iconic Territory parks and reserves are on Aboriginal land that has been leased back to the NTG under joint management arrangements. These jointly managed parks and reserves are environmentally precious natural assets that are essential to people's cultural, social and economic wellbeing, particularly for the Traditional Owners of these places.

Joint management aims for equitable partnerships between the NTG and Traditional Owners and Native Title holders where power and decision making is shared in ways that respect and actively support the cultural values and interests of Traditional Owners. It is often expressed simply as 'working together'. Joint management agreements generally provide for ongoing public enjoyment of the park, conservation management that combines Aboriginal and scientific approaches, and employment and economic benefits for Traditional Owners and Native Title holders, their families and communities.

An appraisal of joint management needs consideration across the wider conservation and land management environment, including the Aboriginal land and sea management movement which has grown exponentially over the past 20 years. Transitioning from joint management to sole management of public protected areas, and even bypassing joint management altogether, has increasingly become a focus for discussion by various groups around the country.

Renegotiating joint management arrangements may lead to some parks or reserves transitioning to sole management by Traditional Owners either as a Territory park or reserve or as an Indigenous Protected Area. This may be a desired and achievable option for some areas over time. In other parks and reserves, Traditional Owners may choose to continue with existing arrangements. Discussions are needed to explore what sole management actually means.

Ensuring a park or reserve remains set aside for public benefit will be a key issue for discussion along with how governance arrangements can best protect the interests of Traditional Owners and the wider community.

Traditional Owners and Native Title holders of parks and reserves that are not currently jointly managed may wish to enter into joint management arrangements. Where this is desired, Parks and Wildlife commits to negotiating arrangements with Traditional Owners or Native Title holders in good faith.

Aerial view of Ormiston Gorge,
Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park

Parks and Wildlife has a genuine commitment to 'two way' management of parks and reserves and a belief that Aboriginal and western knowledge and practices are required to successfully manage our estate to a high standard. Parks and Wildlife acknowledges the need to do better to incorporate Aboriginal ecological knowledge and practice into land and sea management. An increase in Aboriginal content in management plans and strategies and increased involvement of Traditional Owners in the day-to-day running of a park will build closer partnerships with Traditional Owners and deliver improved park management outcomes.

The future of joint management also depends on involving younger people in decision making, as well as land and visitor management, so that genuine intergenerational renewal and capacity building can occur. Parks and Wildlife is committed to supporting Traditional Owners to include more young people in joint management and develop a greater focus on 'joint doing'.

Traditional Owners and Land Council representatives have asked for new regional governance arrangements to provide direct communication with elected representatives. Proposed arrangements include the establishment of Regional Joint Management Groups to act as advisory bodies on regional issues as required and Northern Territory Joint Management Forums, held within each Land Council region. Joint Management Forums will act as peak bodies to advise Ministers on issues broadly concerning joint management of parks and reserves. The forums will provide a chance for the partners to meet on a more regular basis and discuss issues that are affecting Traditional Owners across the Territory. They will also provide an opportunity for Parks and Wildlife to report back to Traditional Owners and Land Councils on the progress of objectives associated with joint management such as employment, governance and natural and cultural values condition assessments. These reports could be in the form of a 'State of the Park' report.

Parks and Wildlife recognises the aspirations of Traditional Owners to derive economic benefit from managing their land and sea country. There is a real desire to increase levels of employment for local Aboriginal people working on their own country. Flexible casual employment opportunities often meet the needs of our joint management partners better than full-time employment.

There is also scope to increase fee for service opportunities for local Aboriginal Land and Sea Ranger groups and local Aboriginal enterprises and businesses to fulfil contracts in parks and reserves.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Long term futures – renegotiate, establish new and continue with existing joint management arrangements

- Develop a 'joint management agreement' between Parks and Wildlife (representing the Northern Territory of Australia), the Land Councils and Traditional Owners to support improvements to joint management arrangements in the long term.
- Develop an institutional and regulatory model that can support sole management aspirations of Traditional Owners, maintain the conservation estate and retain access for the visiting public.
- Improve the participation of Traditional Owners in decision making within jointly managed parks.
- Work with joint management partners, Land Councils and other government organisations to develop pathways for growing the younger generation into governance roles across jointly managed parks.
- Prioritise contributions to the settling of traditional land claims, including Native Title and Aboriginal Land Rights claims.
- Work with Land Councils and Traditional Owners to identify pathways for additional parks to move to joint management.

“

Joint management aims for equitable partnerships between the NTG and Traditional Owners and Native Title holders where power and decision making is shared in ways that respect and actively support the cultural values and interests of Traditional Owners. It is often expressed simply as 'working together'.

Maintain strong relationships with confident joint management partners, increase opportunities for meeting and working together on country and establish better 'two way' management of country.

- Implement best practice governance and administration to Joint Management Committee meetings, including involving Traditional Owners in developing meeting agendas, timely distribution of meeting papers, recording of minutes and actions, and ensuring Aboriginal governance and decision making processes are respected.
- Redesign park joint management plans to align with this Masterplan and to provide greater Traditional Owner input into management directions as well as more clearly define shared goals for the park or reserve and co-design monitoring and reporting on delivery of each plan.
- Develop and deliver programs for Parks and Wildlife staff and Traditional Owners to work together on country and in particular, help involve younger joint management partners in land and sea management activities on parks and reserves.
- Support annual country camps on all jointly managed parks and reserves to allow Parks and Wildlife staff, Traditional Owners and Land Council staff to spend more time working together on natural and cultural resource management programs.
- Improve cross cultural inductions for new staff and involve Traditional Owners and custodians in providing training for jointly managed parks and reserves.

Establish regional governance arrangements to strengthen Traditional Owner decision making and facilitate direct communication between Traditional Owners and elected government representatives.

- Explore options with Traditional Owners and Land Councils to find an appropriate regional model of governance.
- Create and support an identified regional governance framework.
- Hold Joint Management Forums for each Land Council region every two years.
- Provide 'State of the Park' reports to Traditional Owners at joint management forums.
- With other appropriate partners, deliver recurring governance training to joint management partners, engaging external governance mentors for each Board and Committee to attend meetings and provide real time training and mentorship.
- Develop an induction package for Board and Committee members with Parks and Wildlife, Traditional Owners and Land Councils.
- Establish a Joint Management Strategy Group to provide a regular forum for staff from Parks and Wildlife and the Land Councils to progress the strategic direction, risk management and improved implementation of joint management in the Northern Territory.

“

Parks and Wildlife is committed to supporting Traditional Owners to include more young people in joint management and develop a greater focus on 'joint doing'.

Ensure adequate resources are available to jointly managed parks from multiple funding sources so that economic development opportunities can be realised

- Deliver on revenue models for the parks estate, ensuring income generated is invested back into parks, including through joint projects which are determined by decisions made between the joint management partners.
- Leverage resources and utilise the expertise of partners to enable the delivery of Traditional Owner aspirations for parks and reserves.
- Establish committed funding for community engagement work, such as supporting country camps.
- Develop committed funding packages for Flexible Employment Programs for each joint management park and reserve, which includes annual budgets for Aboriginal skill development training.
- Develop committed funding packages for fee for service contracts on each joint management park or reserve for relevant Aboriginal Land and Sea Ranger groups and local Aboriginal enterprises.
- Work with the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics to identify additional suitable contracts through infrastructure works programs that represent opportunities for Aboriginal businesses.
- Work with partners to support Aboriginal businesses and entities, building their capacity to undertake identified fee for service contracts.



“

Parks and Wildlife has a genuine commitment to 'two way' management of parks and reserves and a belief that Aboriginal and western knowledge and practices are required to successfully manage our estate to a high standard.



Birds on Casuarina Beach,
Casuarina Coastal Reserve

TARGETS

Theme: Joint Management in Partnership with Traditional Owners

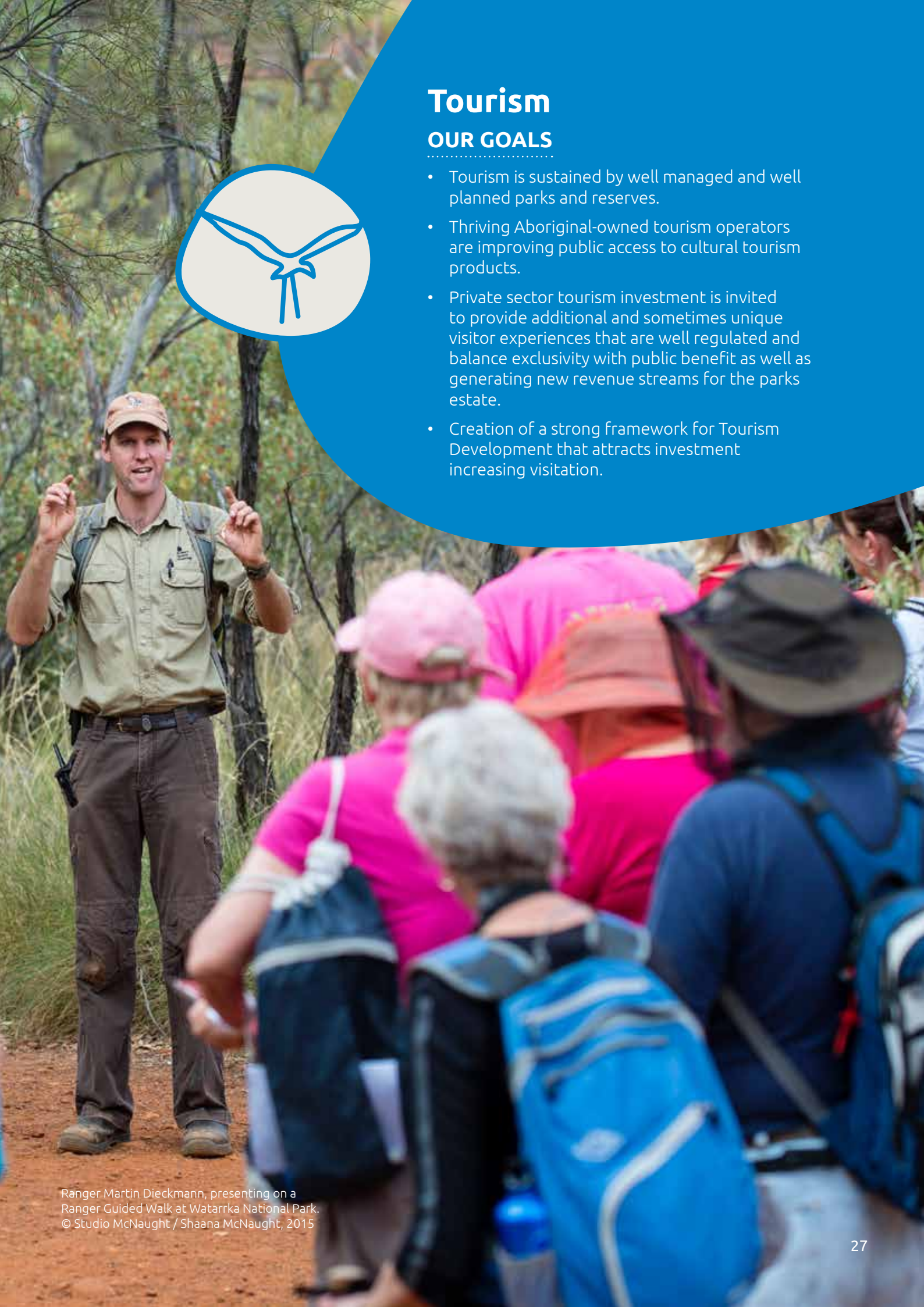
- By 2024, committed funding for flexible casual employment and fee for service opportunities are established for each jointly managed park or reserve.
- By 2024, an appropriate regional governance framework has been established and joint management forums for each Land Council region are being held every two years.
- By 2024, a joint management plan template that captures any new legislation and provides for greater Traditional Owner input into management directions has been finalised and used in the development of new and updated joint management plans.
- By 2026, country camps in jointly managed parks and reserves are held annually where desired.
- By 2026, indicators measuring joint management effectiveness have been developed and implemented across the Territory, including Traditional Owner satisfaction.
- By 2027, revenue models have enabled improved funding for joint management.
- By 2030, discussions with joint management partners have determined Traditional Owner aspirations for long term park management arrangements.
- By 2030, Aboriginal entities and businesses are undertaking fee for service contracts on all relevant jointly managed parks and reserves.
- By 2053, long term arrangements for joint management of parks and reserves are settled.

Tourism

OUR GOALS



- Tourism is sustained by well managed and well planned parks and reserves.
- Thriving Aboriginal-owned tourism operators are improving public access to cultural tourism products.
- Private sector tourism investment is invited to provide additional and sometimes unique visitor experiences that are well regulated and balance exclusivity with public benefit as well as generating new revenue streams for the parks estate.
- Creation of a strong framework for Tourism Development that attracts investment increasing visitation.



National parks and reserves are the foundation of many tourism enterprises worldwide and are a mainstay of tourism operations in the Northern Territory.

Safe, world class parks and reserves provide opportunities for well-regulated tourism enterprises to showcase unique and diverse Territory assets. Parks bring tourists to an area, however tourism operators play an important role in improving the accessibility of parks to many people who cannot or will not undertake a park visit without assistance. Aside from enhancing and extending the visitor experience, tourism operators also provide a platform for park values, which can help strengthen support for protected areas, while providing direct and indirect benefits to local communities. In some instances tourism operators also assist with monitoring compliance and emergency response.

The Northern Territory Parks 10 Year Activation Plan (Attachment A of this Masterplan) details a prioritised list of infrastructure development projects to be progressed over the next 10 years. These priorities will be important to the tourism sector as well as advancing the recreational opportunity for Territorians. Some priorities identified in the Activation Plan will be advanced by inviting private sector investment into their development or management.

Public support for private sector investments is qualified by the need to align projects so that there is a meaningful contribution to management of parks and reserves, visitor experiences are improved and biodiversity and cultural heritage outcomes are not compromised.

Investment proposals will be assessed against an approved set of criteria with clear alignment with this Masterplan, Parks and Wildlife's values and objectives, as well as Traditional Owner aspirations for jointly managed parks. Due to the stated concerns about equity of access, an important component of any proposal that includes an exclusive offering is that it must also include experiences and opportunities for free and independent travellers.

Expanding the visitor capacity and experiences in parks within a few hours' drive from major population centres, such as Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs, will be key focus areas for tourism development. As some of these visitor nodes are already significantly developed, significant threats to natural and cultural values can be minimised. The development of a tourism classification system will assist with this process, enabling differing types of tourism and all levels of service to be recognised and catered for within our parks and reserves.

As part of the growth of cultural tourism within the parks estate, it is essential to support and work with Aboriginal Territorians on specific projects. Providing a platform for Aboriginal businesses to engage in tourism opportunities will also advance economic development, self-determination and ownership of a product. Aboriginal tourism businesses are a tourist asset that can be marketed as such. World-wide Indigenous tourism ventures are proven to be attractive to visitors. Specific actions and targets regarding Aboriginal tourism are included in the theme – Aboriginal Economic Development.



In order to expand visitor capacity and experience offerings, parks within a few hours' drive from major population centres, such as Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs, will be key areas for intensive tourism development.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Provide support for tourism

- Protect and present parks and reserves in the Northern Territory in the best and safest possible manner.
- Deliver accessible and inclusive tourism experiences to the free and independent traveller and maximise experiences for all visitors.
- Collaborate with our partners, including Traditional Owners and the tourism industry, to develop a tourism classification system that identifies appropriate sectors and tourism opportunities for parks and reserves based on their level of service and standard of protection, along with visitor expectations, market requirements and economic drivers.
- Develop and deliver on revenue investment plans to demonstrate to visitors that the revenue generated by their visits is invested back into the parks estate.
- Continue to maintain and revitalise existing visitor infrastructure.
- Develop an overarching plan for Litchfield National Park that considers the flow and density of tourism operators and visitor numbers and provides for infrastructure to effectively manage potential conflicts.
- Ensure tourism development and products are well regulated so that natural and cultural values remain central to park management, and are aligned with the values and principles of a government-led parks estate and the Traditional Owners.
- Implement the Northern Territory Parks 10 Year Activation Plan, ensuring the agreement and involvement of Traditional Owners whenever proposals relate to a jointly managed park.
- Develop a monitoring framework for evaluating tourism-related benefits and impacts on the parks estate, which will improve our ability to measure the value of parks to tourism in the Northern Territory and vice versa.
- Prioritise market-led tourism development proposals that align to the investment framework.



Exploring West MacDonnell Ranges in a 4WD.
© 2016 Ocean Art Australia, all rights reserved.

Enable private sector investment

- Assist our partners to identify current barriers to tourism development in partnership with commercial businesses, stakeholders and community.
- Together with Traditional Owners, the private sector and other key stakeholders, develop a robust policy framework that provides investors with opportunity and certainty when undertaking either government or market-led proposals and assists proponents to navigate conservation, cultural and Traditional Owner approvals processes.

TARGETS

Theme: Tourism

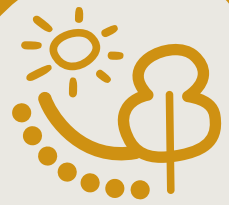
- By 2023, a tourism development investment framework is finalised that generates new Tourism products in the Parks Estate.
- By 2025, a report has been produced and published outlining the benefit to visitor infrastructure from investment of tourism generated revenue in parks and reserves.
- By 2026, new visitor hubs have been identified in the Northern Australia, Savannah Gulf, Barkly and Central Australia parks and reserves.
- By 2030, a tourism classification system for the parks estate has been developed with our partners.
- By 2030, three geotrails have been developed across the Top End, Barkly and Central Australia regions.
- By 2032, priorities outlined in the Northern Territory Parks 10 Year Activation Plan have been completed.
- By 2038, a Visitor Experience Development Plan has been produced for each of the top 16 parks and reserves (as rated through the Parks Classification System).
- By 2053, 16 parks and reserves offer balanced and sustainable tourism experiences, delivered through partnerships with commercial enterprises, stakeholders and local communities.
- By 2053, there are Aboriginal led tourism operations on 50 per cent of parks and reserves that are suitable for tourism development.



Recreational Futures

OUR GOALS

- Diverse, safe and readily accessible opportunities for quality outdoor recreation experiences on our world class parks and reserves that connect people with nature, culture and history.
- Ecologically sustainable, steady and managed growth that is consistent with our principles and balanced against the goals of the other themes.



Territorians are strongly connected to their nature based lifestyle and link parks and reserves with health and well-being.

Parks and reserves deliver a range of important and diverse places for locals and visitors to relax, recharge, work and play. There is strong support for developing and expanding the range of recreational opportunities on parks and in ensuring these experiences are broadly available and accessible, now and into the future.

Creating and maintaining special places and spaces that encourage active recreation supports health and well-being outcomes for those who visit the parks estate. High visitation urban parks recorded significant increased use during COVID-19 lockdowns, indicating their value to the Territory community. It has never been more evident that publicly accessible and inclusive parks and open spaces are critical for maintaining mental and physical well-being.

To achieve this, there must be investment in new and existing visitor infrastructure, support for new recreational opportunities, agreement and involvement of Traditional Owners whenever proposals relate to jointly managed parks, enhanced safety, and improved accessibility to new and existing sites at different times of the year. Strategic re-investment of revenue generated through fees and charges in key parks and reserves will improve access to sites and experiences.

Increasing the number of Aboriginal owned and operated and other commercial businesses on our parks estate also has the potential to provide a wider range of recreational activities that reflect local and visitor interest in both our natural environment and in participation and sharing of cultural knowledge and experiences.

With an expected expansion to the Territory population over time, increased visitation can and should be expected and encouraged. Responses from public consultation suggested ways to increase engagement by the entire community and across the parks estate. Ideas included increasing the number of Parks and Wildlife 'Friends of' groups; improving community engagement and volunteer programs; more face-to-face ranger and cultural interactions; better advertising and marketing; and, improved interpretation in parks and reserves.

Furthermore, it was recommended that a wider variety of recreational activities be provided, along with additional short walks, more 4WD tracks with associated camping sites, improved recreational fishing opportunities, greater access for small lightweight vehicles, and more swimming options.

Hunting is a significant recreational activity on some of the parks estate. Whilst there was no clear agreement between Territorians for expanding hunting areas, there is widespread agreement that Parks and Wildlife are best placed to manage and maintain compliance of the existing estate available to hunting. Planning for growth of the park estate will provide an opportunity to investigate whether there are opportunities to expand the managed hunting areas that can be realised through park acquisition.

“**Creating and maintaining special places and spaces that encourage active recreation supports health and well-being outcomes for those who visit the parks estate.**”

WHAT WE WILL DO

Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and experiences that are diverse and accessible

- Introduce an Online Booking System to provide certainty of experience for recreational users.
- Use Online Booking System usage data to inform priorities for increasing capacity for visitation in areas where opportunities are typically booking out.
- Build opportunities for 2WD access to recreational opportunities that do not require a boat, including more short walks, swimming, cycling, fishing and passive recreational interests such as bird watching, canopy walks and photography.
- Investigate options for 4WD tracks and associated camping sites within the existing parks estate, particularly near regional centres, and develop and implement a grading classification system for all 4WD tracks.
- Provide opportunities for managed introduction of special interest activities such as rock climbing, abseiling, bouldering, slacklining and paragliding.
- Develop zones or recreational precincts that offer specialised recreational opportunities across the parks estate for activities that may be in demand by special interest groups that do not fit with traditional park uses such as regulated tracks for side-by-sides and horse riding trails.
- Develop and deliver on revenue investment plans to provide strong evidence to recreational users that revenue generated by their visits is invested back into the parks estate.
- Ensure that key urban parks, such as Casuarina Coastal Reserve and the Alice Springs Telegraph Station, showcase best practice park management for recreational opportunities.
- Improve accessibility and safety for all park users, particularly for parks and reserves located near urban centres, taking into account all age ranges, needs and abilities by ensuring parks and reserves have comprehensive accessibility and safety audit reports.
- Ensure new and updated infrastructure takes into account people with different access needs.
- Prioritise our investments in parks and reserves that offer recreation opportunities and experiences which improve social, health and well-being outcomes in the community.
- Solicit private investment in the development of adventure activities and other recreation opportunities based on market demand studies.
- Preserve existing hunting areas on the parks estate and investigate the extension of programs like Back Country Hunting while maintaining firm regulatory oversight.
- Regularly survey visitors (2-5 years) to determine whether visitors' recreation expectations are being met.

Grow visitation

- Promote and leverage the important role parks and reserves play in the health and well-being of visitors.
- Advertise and promote lesser known parks to encourage more visitation.
- Establish more 'Friends of' groups across the Territory to better encourage community involvement and recreation in the parks estate.
- Develop and maintain an understanding of park demographics so that operations may be adjusted to meet current and changing needs.
- Work with partners and key stakeholders to develop sustainable relationships that support the delivery of recreational pursuits on the parks estate.
- Advertise and educate the Territory community about existing and new opportunities for recreation on the parks estate and ensure that website information is contemporary and easy to navigate.



“

With an expected expansion to the Territory population over time, increased visitation can and should be expected and encouraged.

TARGETS

Theme: Recreational Futures

- By 2023, an Online Booking System has been introduced to manage bookings for camping and multi-day walks providing increased certainty for park users.
- By 2025, all parks and reserves have been reviewed with a view to establishing new short walks, swimming areas and 4WD tracks with associated camping sites.
- By 2026, key parks and reserves have comprehensive Accessibility and Safety Audit Reports.
- By 2027, the recreational opportunities in parks and reserves located near urban centres have been assessed and recreation capacity statements developed with Traditional Owners of jointly managed parks to deliver agreed new recreation offerings.
- By 2027, regional spatial planning conducted to explore new parks and reserves considers the new areas suitable for hunting opportunities.
- By 2030, priority recommendations in Accessibility Audit Reports have been implemented.
- By 2032, visitor satisfaction rates are at 95 per cent or higher.
- By 2032, priorities outlined in the Northern Territory Parks 10 Year Activation Plan have been completed.
- By 2053, key parks and reserves have refreshed infrastructure reflecting lifestyle changes while remaining relevant to Territorians.

Aboriginal Economic Development

OUR GOALS

- Policy has embedded Aboriginal economic development outcomes in the management of parks and reserves.
- Aboriginal economic development action plans are developed and implementation is facilitated with Aboriginal partners for each park and reserve.
- Fee for service and flexible work opportunities suited to the way Aboriginal people and businesses wish to work are established on parks and reserves.



Aboriginal economic development is likely to remain a bipartisan priority in the Northern Territory for years to come.

Aboriginal people represent 30 per cent of the Northern Territory population, are underrepresented in business and employment and suffer poorer life outcomes than non-Aboriginal Territorians.

Aboriginal economic development can be achieved on parks and reserves through the letting of contracts, fee for service arrangements, hospitality and tourism business opportunities and the creation of flexible employment opportunities. Creating economic development opportunities needs to be highly consultative and flexible to facilitate self-determined opportunities for Aboriginal people.

During public consultation, community feedback on Aboriginal economic development supported a renewed focus on delivering economic opportunity on the parks estate. An effective policy framework with embedded outcomes was the preferred option, rather than a prescribed list of projects. There was support for developing projects with the advice and involvement of Aboriginal people. This Masterplan does not prescribe a list of projects but calls up a planning process to allow specific projects to be developed for each park or reserve with the Aboriginal people who will be involved.

It is also important to increase opportunities for Aboriginal people to do the work of managing parks on a day-to-day basis. In light of this, money will be allocated to provide for fee for service contracts for Aboriginal businesses; flexible employment opportunities allowing Aboriginal people to work in ways that suit them; and, a concerted effort to work towards at least half of the ranger workforce identifying as Aboriginal, with a focus on having Aboriginal people working on their own country.

Enabling access for Traditional Owners to establish exclusive use areas within the parks estate is seen as an important element in facilitating Traditional Owner participation as employees in tourism ventures and to run their own enterprises. Parks and Wildlife supports the establishment of arrangements for Aboriginal people to live locally on park. Responsibility for building and maintaining infrastructure within those living areas lies with Traditional Owners and Land Councils.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Together with our partners establish an Aboriginal economic development policy framework

- Align purchasing and contracting policies with whole-of-government Aboriginal economic development frameworks.
- Ensure that policy guiding concessionaire opportunities on the parks estate facilitate opportunities for Aboriginal businesses.
- Improve compliance and reporting by contractors, private businesses and concessionaires receiving commercial gain from the park in regards to Aboriginal employment and opportunities.

Create, facilitate and implement Aboriginal economic development action plans

- Work with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal businesses, Aboriginal Land and Sea Ranger groups and Land Councils to develop a list of Aboriginal economic development projects for each park or reserve; to be reviewed every five years.
- Work with Traditional Owners and Land Councils to develop an investment portfolio for jointly managed parks and other Aboriginal land where there is an interest in being part of the parks estate.
- Develop market scenario planning models to evaluate proposed Aboriginal economic development projects.
- Negotiate investment in priority projects from both government and Aboriginal business revenue and investor streams.
- As capacity grows, invest in an Aboriginal economic development partnership team.
- Ensure legislative frameworks provide for flexible partnerships and third party activity in parks and reserves, and where required provide suitable land tenure or allow an interest in the land that can provide certainty to Traditional Owners and commercial operators.

Expand fee for service and flexible work opportunities

- Develop a guaranteed annual budget for fee for service activities within each park and reserve, which will be offered as contracts to Aboriginal businesses and Aboriginal Land and Sea Ranger groups.
- Work closely with Traditional Owners and Land Councils to review and reform employment practices and actively build pathways for meaningful local Aboriginal employment.
- Work with other government agencies to build fee for service capacity to match guaranteed budget availability and project types.
- Develop and maintain a Parks and Wildlife Aboriginal employment and training strategy in collaboration with Traditional Owners and Land Councils that supports existing park lease obligations and provides a training program to facilitate Aboriginal skill development, enabling ready access to flexible employment opportunities.
- Develop a guaranteed annual budget that is available for flexible employment programs within each park and reserve.
- Explore models to provide scope for Traditional Owners to take more responsibility for the management of their parks funding, including allocations for casual employment and contract management.

Support Aboriginal owned and operated tourism businesses

- Work with our partners to increase the number of Aboriginal tourism businesses operating successfully and sustainably within the parks estate.
- Develop a strategy for attracting Aboriginal owned and operated tourism businesses to work in parks and reserves.
- Support Traditional Owners and Land Councils as they explore aspirations to establish exclusive use areas where Traditional Owners can live and work on the parks estate.
- Explore opportunities for developing a 'Camping with Custodians' initiative.

- Collaborate with Traditional Owners to identify potential tourism business opportunities in parks and reserves.
- Implement a support framework to ensure Aboriginal businesses succeed in operating tourism businesses in parks and reserves.

TARGETS

Theme: Aboriginal Economic Development

- By 2024, committed funds for fee-for-service and flexible employment programs have been identified for all parks and reserves as a component of revenue investment planning.
- By 2025, a strategy for increasing Aboriginal tourism businesses operating within the parks estate has been developed with our partners.
- By 2025, two Aboriginal economic development projects per region have been negotiated with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal businesses, Aboriginal Land and Sea Ranger groups and Land Councils.
- By 2028, there has been a 10 per cent increase in Aboriginal owned and operated tourism businesses in parks and reserves.
- By 2030, two Aboriginal economic development projects are being implemented within each region.
- By 2032, there has been a 15 per cent increase in Aboriginal owned and operated tourism businesses in parks and reserves.
- By 2032, over 50 per cent of park rangers are Aboriginal and working on their own country.

Partnerships

OUR GOALS

- Strategic partnerships are identified, developed and grown where there is a clear public benefit to parks and reserves.
- Volunteer partnerships which deliver benefits to parks and the community are developed and strengthened.
- Personal and community connections with parks and reserves are robust.



Hiking at Euro Ridge along the Larapinta Trail, Tjoritja / West MacDonell National Park



The stewardship of our parks is important to Traditional Owners and Native Title holders, industry, landholders, all levels of government and the community.

By identifying partnership opportunities that will strengthen conservation outcomes, significant benefits can be realised for park managers and key user groups, such as tourism operators and park recreational users.

Continued connections between people and the natural environment are essential for the health and wellbeing of communities and the conservation of nature. Well defined partnerships provide immense public benefit in a protected area context.

Key strategic partnerships can help redefine how we do business, working with a collection of differing strengths, skill sets and knowledge banks to improve outcomes for the Territory. Partnerships can be many and varied. All partnerships need to be sustainable in terms of economics but also, critically, in terms of the ecological benefits and social and cultural returns.

The Territory's protected areas are valuable assets that provide a foundation for nature and culture based tourism and make a significant contribution to the Territory economy. Public-private partnerships hinge around investment in protected areas and have been the subject of intense scrutiny over recent years. Such partnerships are often seen to bring efficiency gains alongside an opportunity for land managers to be less reliant on public funds. A balanced approach to investment development is key, ensuring developments proceed only when a clear public benefit exists.

In addition to private sector partnerships, other collaborations with community members, conservation groups, non-government organisations, park user groups, Aboriginal and environmental special interest groups are desirable. In all cases, partnerships must be beneficial to both stakeholders and park managers for the partnership to be sustainable.

Having a clear vision of what needs to be done and building strong cooperation between partners through effective communication is the key to success, leading to more effective protected area management outcomes on a Territory, regional and local park level.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Identify, develop and grow strategic partnerships where there is a clear public benefit to do so

- Pursue and work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal groups to deliver improved park management outcomes through understanding, respect and sharing of traditional knowledge.
- Adopt a collaborative approach to developing functional 'good neighbour' relations where mutual benefits exist and to reduce threats to park values.
- Work with our partners to establish a parks estate research prospectus that will be updated as new information emerges.
- Collaborate with other protected area managers to complement park related strategic outcomes.
- Collaborate across Government to facilitate economic development within the Northern Territory.
- Be open to new partners and types of partnerships to foster improved community stewardship, being comfortable with diversity across the partnership portfolio.

Pursue appropriate private investment in infrastructure and experience development on the parks estate

- Create a development investment framework for Territory parks and reserves that clearly articulates the approvals processes applicable across multiple tenures and joint management arrangements.
- Prioritise investment partnerships which help achieve the objectives set out in the Northern Territory Parks 10 Year Activation Plan while also providing flexibility for market-led partnerships and opportunities.
- Ensure transparent and clear business relationships with investors and stakeholders that consider social, environmental and cultural outcomes, have clear processes with reasonable timeframes, provide equity of opportunity, plain English permit agreements, reduce red tape and implement other measures to increase investor confidence.

Develop and strengthen volunteer partnerships in parks and reserves which deliver benefits to parks and reserves and the community

- Provide longer term certainty to key stakeholders and groups through a formalised partnership approach that is delivered through written Volunteer Agreements.
- Develop volunteer partnerships that deliver shared benefits, such as access to special sites, knowledge sharing, and the creation of niche interest programs like rock climbing and trail expansion.
- Actively seek skilled volunteers to help address park management issues, focusing volunteer activities where they are most needed.
- Align volunteer contributions on parks and reserves with park management objectives.

Create personal connection between the community and parks and reserves

- Maintain and improve access to public land as a shared resource for all.
- Develop mechanisms to seek and gather feedback from the local community to influence key Parks and Wildlife policies and decision making.
- Encourage community connection and regular use of parks and reserves, as time spent in parks benefits everyone.
- Promote the importance of physical connection to nature for health and well-being benefits (Healthy Parks, Healthy People / Parks for People). Seek out partnerships with health care providers and recreation groups to encourage local community to visit 'their parks' and acknowledge a global trend for health professionals prescribing nature.

TARGETS

Theme: Partnerships

- By 2023, a development investment framework has been created to provide clarity on approval process applicable to the various tenures and joint management arrangements across the Territory.
- By 2023, 16 Aboriginal rangers have graduated through the Aboriginal Ranger Compliance Program.
- By 2023, a research prospectus has been developed and published.
- By 2026, two new across government partnerships and two new nonprofit or private sector partnerships have been formed to advance the protection of natural, recreational and cultural values.
- By 2042, there has been a significant increase in the number of meaningful partnerships with external groups, resulting in positive outcomes for Parks and Wildlife.
- By 2053, 50 per cent of all parks and reserves with tourism potential offer enhanced tourism and recreational experiences, delivered through sustainable partnerships with commercial enterprises, stakeholders and local communities.

“

Continued connections between people and the natural environment are essential for the health and wellbeing of communities and the conservation of nature



Baruwei Loop Walk,
Nitmiluk National Park

GROWING THE ESTATE

OUR GOALS

- A strengthened and expanded Northern Territory system of parks and reserves built on a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system that supports biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage protection, recreation, health and wellbeing and tourism.
- A system for establishing, managing and monitoring perpetual private protected areas that is applicable to the Northern Territory context and has the support of Territorians is implemented.





The NTG manages 85 parks and reserves across the Territory, representing 3.75 per cent of the land tenure.

During public consultation, strong support was indicated for new parks and reserves to be identified in the Territory. People want new parks to:

- Improve biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage protection recreational and tourism opportunities;
- Spread the load of visitation on existing parks and reserves;
- Increase hunting opportunities; and
- Find land that is fit for purpose.

Territorians overwhelmingly wish to see parks and reserves expanded for the protection of biodiversity and cultural heritage. However the community also believes gaps in recreation and tourism offerings must be addressed.

Many of the Territory's terrestrial, coastal and marine biogeographic regions are underrepresented within the protected area system. The biogeographic regions in the northern and western parts of the Top End have a reasonable extent of reserves covered by the parks estate and Indigenous Protected Areas. However the Central Arnhem, Channel Country, Gulf Plains, Sturt Plateau, Mitchell Grass Downs, Burt Plain, Finke and Simpson Strzelecki Dunefields biogeographic regions are entirely unrepresented or have only a minimal extent of reserves at present.

The Territory has an extensive coastline and relatively undisturbed, diverse marine environments which are classed as unique, both nationally and globally. Approximately 26 per cent of the Territory's marine waters are located within Indigenous Protected Areas, whilst 4 per cent are protected within the NT parks estate. Over 40 per cent of the Territory's coastline is currently managed as Indigenous Protected Areas, a further 10 per cent is protected by the NT parks estate, and 4.5 per cent is within the Commonwealth-managed Kakadu National Park.

A review of recreational opportunities for Territorians will consider principles including the availability of nature based recreation and the health and wellbeing outcomes that can be achieved by increasing or diversifying the park offering, particularly in relation to proximity to urban centres and diversity of experience. Consideration will also be given to spreading existing visitation at high use areas, such as Litchfield National Park, by replicating some of the swimming, camping and walking opportunities to be found there in other nearby locations.

Tourism opportunities for new parks and reserves will also be a consideration, focusing primarily on drive markets and where there are long stretches of Territory highway with no opportunity for the drive market to stop and explore along the way. The Barkly Highway is one such opportunity.

The existing parks estate is a legacy of incremental acquisition of land parcels across the Northern Territory, with few historical records to justify why they were included in the estate at the time. Many of the smaller parks and reserves have minimal biodiversity conservation, recreational or cultural values. Furthermore, some parks and reserves do not have access via roads.

Through public consultation, a majority viewpoint was that all existing parcels should remain in the parks estate. When responding to whether there are existing parcels of land that should not be a park or reserve, the clear majority thought all parks were of value, were selected for valid reasons and should remain as parks and reserves. The uncertainties of climate change was also reflected in these responses. As stated above however, not all parks and reserves managed by Parks and Wildlife have been selected for a reason that is valid to the core goals of protected area management and there is a case for some rationalisation of the estate. It should also be noted that the rationalisation of these areas does not necessarily mean that they are unable to be used as they currently are, but they may be better and more ably managed by other organisations.

Finally, there are areas managed by Parks and Wildlife where the tenure as a park or reserve under the TPWCA has not yet been established. An important part of consolidating the estate is to ensure that those areas with values requiring protection have the best possible legislative protection.

In other Australian jurisdictions, models such as private ownership of land that is protected in perpetuity are being considered as ways to expand the parks and reserves system. It was clear from public consultation that Territorians do not want to jump straight in to privately owned national parks. They believe that parks and reserves should remain as public assets, and government-run parks offer better levels of protection for natural and cultural values, as well as equity of access to all layers of society.

There was support however for exploring private ownership options based on existing examples in other jurisdictions. In the Territory context this could facilitate better outcomes for Traditional Owners, particularly if Aboriginal land was included in the definition of a privately owned national park. In the short term, private landholder involvement in Section 73 and 74 agreements under the TPWCA could be promoted while a system for private protected areas is under consideration.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Strengthen and expand the Northern Territory's system of parks

- Establish a baseline understanding of the natural and cultural values of the Territory's land, coasts and marine systems to identify gaps and priorities for conservation.

- Develop an expansion strategy with a list of priorities for obtaining land in underrepresented ecosystems and of cultural importance, where there is a need to improve or add to existing recreational opportunity or develop new tourism operations.
- Continue to review, establish and implement models of management for marine protected areas managed under Northern Territory legislation including zoning and models of integrated management with other sea country reserve types.
- Ensure Traditional Owner and Native Title holder involvement in development of an expansion strategy and support for acquisition and management of new protected areas.

Review the parks estate

- Develop and publish the assessment criteria that will be employed to review the existing parks estate for suitability of retention or transition.
- Identify parcels that, according to assessment criteria, are suited to a transition program and engage Traditional Owners and Native Title holders in transition planning of identified parcels.
- Implement transition of parcels with the support of Traditional Owners and Native Title holders and stakeholders.
- Review smaller parks and reserves and identify opportunities for improved park boundaries or expansion to increase public benefit where the area is not suitable for transition.
- Identify those areas managed by Parks and Wildlife but not declared under the TPWCA and progress formal recognition in legislation.

Secure access

- Where it is identified that high value areas of the parks estate are not able to be accessed by road, negotiate access for park managers and the public where appropriate.

Develop a transitional program for purely recreational activities

- Identify areas of land that are currently managed by Parks and Wildlife as purely recreational assets and the land is not owned by the Territory or the Conservation Land Corporation.
- Negotiate new management arrangements with the appropriate landholder and other recreational management institutions, for example local government, that provide for ongoing public recreation opportunity.

Explore private ownership models suitable for the Northern Territory

- Undertake a review of existing private protected areas across jurisdictions and identify a system that is suitable for the Northern Territory that will receive community and government support.
- Promote private landholder involvement in Section 73 and 74 agreements under the TPWCA.

TARGETS

Theme: Growing the Estate

- By 2023, assessment criteria for the review of the parks estate has been developed and published.
- By 2026, with the support of Native Title holders, the Keep River National Park proposed extension (Spirit Hills) and Fish River Gorge have been declared and gazetted.
- By 2027, regional spatial planning is conducted with Traditional Owners and Native Title holders, landholders and key stakeholders to develop a strategy for the establishment of new parks and reserves.
- By 2028, a Territory system for perpetual private protected areas has been established.
- By 2030, all parks and reserves have formalised management access where required.
- By 2040, new management arrangements are in place for all land, parks and reserves identified for transition from Parks and Wildlife management.
- By 2053, NTG parks and reserves account for 7 per cent of the Territory terrestrial, coastal and marine land and seascapes.

“

Territorians overwhelmingly wish to see parks and reserves expanded for the protection of natural and cultural values.



Government workers house,
Arltunga Historical Reserve

Park Access

OUR GOALS

- Existing utility infrastructure is maintained and improved in parks and reserves that support high volume tourism experiences.
- Non-park related infrastructure initiatives are leveraged to improve road access to parks and reserves.
- New government supported infrastructure improves park access and is simple and low impact.
- Access to particular areas is responsive to the wishes of Traditional Owners and Native Title holders or cultural site custodians.
- Park locations that are open to the public are managed to conserve the health and sustainability of the place.





A feature of the Northern Territory is the lack of utility and road infrastructure across the landscape which in turn constrains park access.

This includes roads, power and water, communications connectivity and proximity to services such as emergency medical care.

Territorians are supportive of opening up new areas of parks and reserves, however they prefer that infrastructure is simple and sustainable. Territorians want existing places to be looked after, and new infrastructure to be supported by an appropriate budget for maintenance.

A preference for low impact recreation needs to be balanced by a sustainable tourism experience and the requirement to provide accessibility to all people, regardless of physical limitations, disabilities or age. Some visitor nodes in the Territory parks estate already support high visitor volumes and are suited to more intensive development that will provide greater access.

Opportunities to significantly expand visitor access by improving road infrastructure are considered very important to Territorians. When existing infrastructure or new developments can be leveraged, significant cost savings are likely to be realised. By upgrading existing roads, many parks can become all-weather accessible or accessible to a wider range of vehicles further improving access to all people.

Water availability is a major limitation for developing tourism and recreational opportunities in parks and reserves. Linking parks to major utilities infrastructure has limited support or opportunity, so water supply solutions must be innovative to meet the needs of parks and reserves, particularly in Central Australia. Similarly, advances in off grid power supplies mean that there is ever-increasing opportunity to provide powered experiences and support for other utility types to assist with emergency response in remote areas which becomes ever more important with increasing access.

The community believe that we should value our parks and reserves and price the commercial use of them accordingly. Strong community support has also been given to ensuring Traditional Owner preferences for what happens within a park or reserve should take precedence over tourism proposals and gaining park revenue. Consultation and collaboration with Traditional Owners is fundamental to ensuring parks and reserves are managed for the protection of cultural and natural values.

Territorians are also very supportive of the idea that when particular areas of a park become over- used by visitors or a particular activity, every effort should be made to relieve pressure on the site to allow it to recover. Clear preference has been given to not allowing sites to degrade, employing caps on visitor numbers, and considering closure of sites to allow them to recover if no other options are feasible.

Ensuring public access and equity of access by all people regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age, is very important to Territorians. There was very little support for allowing only private operators access to particular areas. People are concerned that this will lead to exclusivity, inequity and potential conflicts of interest. Consequently, when new commercial developments result in new areas or infrastructure on park, consideration will be given as to how at least some of that product will be made available to free and independent travellers with a focus on access for all people. Where a new area is simply too dangerous or too sensitive for unattended free and independent travellers to access, the benefit of some guided access will be weighed against potential for overuse and degradation of natural values.

WHAT WE WILL DO

Support and improve utility infrastructure

- Prioritise delivery of improved utility infrastructure at key high volume tourism destinations on the parks estate.

Build on existing or new infrastructure to improve road access

- Prioritise delivery of new road infrastructure where it will open access to new parks and reserves or new areas of a park or reserve.
- Support wherever possible the upgrade of highways and arterial roads and park roads where it will increase seasonal access or make parks and reserves accessible to a wider range of vehicles.
- Support the development of facilities on parks and reserves for environmentally sustainable transport, such as Level 2 & 3 charging stations for electric vehicles.

Develop better off grid solutions for power and water supply

- Develop a portfolio of sustainable utilities options for park and reserve investments including solar power, waterless toilets and water generating and saving technologies.
- Partner with sustainable water solutions companies to explore innovative water harvesting techniques applicable to Territory parks and reserves.
- Build any new infrastructure using off grid utilities technology and waterless toilets.

Continue to drive improvements in telecommunications

- Work with telecommunications providers to deliver mobile connectivity across the Territory parks estate.

Improve processes for commercial use of parks and reserves

- Develop a clear policy framework that sets commercial rates for both exclusive and non-exclusive commercial use of parks and reserves that is benchmarked against other Australian jurisdictions.
- Provide certainty to businesses regarding rates that will apply to the commercial use of parks and reserves.
- Review the policy that will govern commercial rates and arrangements at least every five years.

Prioritise Traditional Owner views regarding access

- Restrictions on access to culturally significant and sacred sites will be managed in accordance with cultural management plans.
- Develop a well-defined and negotiated list of where access is currently proposed or occurring, which Traditional Owners believe is inappropriate for cultural reasons.
- Establish plans to transition visitation to alternative nearby experiences where appropriate.

Preserve well-loved locations

- Over-used sites will be identified and prioritised for site management plans that will do one of the following:
 - Cap visitation
 - Harden surfaces which are prone to instability and erosion and provide more infrastructure to manage impacts
 - Spread visitation to a new, similar experience that can be developed nearby.
- Where these sites occur on jointly managed parks, Traditional Owners will be involved in the planning and decision making regarding the best approach to address impacts.

Ensure equity of access

- Undertake a review of the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Commission Act 1980* and *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976* to classify and manage Territory parks and reserves to ensure each park or reserve is provided an appropriate level of protection and access.
- Negotiate some level of basic public access as part of any commercial investment into new infrastructure and experiences within parks and reserves that provides access to all people regardless of age, disabilities or physical limitations.
- Access to sites and experiences evaluated as too dangerous or too sensitive for unmanaged visitation could be considered for exclusive access arrangements. However a contribution to an experience that can be opened to the public could be negotiated as part of an approval.



TARGETS

Theme: Park Access

- By 2025, a policy establishing the contribution rates for commercial use of parks and reserves has been finalised and will be reviewed every five years thereafter.
- By 2027, site management plans for over-used sites have been established.
- By 2027, a well-defined and negotiated list of where access is currently proposed or occurring where Traditional Owners believe access is inappropriate for cultural reasons is developed in accordance with cultural management plans.
- By 2030, one innovative water harvesting and supply project is in situ in a Central Australian park or reserve.
- By 2030, the parks revenue model, fees and charges have been reviewed to ensure they remain contemporary and adequate.
- By 2032, priorities outlined in the Northern Territory Parks 10 Year Activation Plan have been completed.
- By 2035, road access is provided to at least two new locations within Limmen National Park.
- By 2037, public access to all locations is culturally appropriate and managed to ensure sites are not over-used.
- By 2053, access to parks and reserves is balanced between protection, recreation and tourism and has significantly increased.



REFERENCES

- Aboriginal Affairs. 2019. Everyone Together – Aboriginal Affairs Strategy 2019-2029. Northern Territory Government, Darwin, Northern Territory. https://dcm.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/799219/everyone-together-aa-strategy.pdf, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Aboriginal Affairs. 2021a. Closing the Gap – Northern Territory Implementation Plan 2021. Northern Territory Government, Darwin, Northern Territory. https://aboriginalaffairs.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1039814/closing-the-gap-implementation-plan-web.pdf, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Aboriginal Affairs. 2021b. Everyone Together Aboriginal Affairs Strategy Progress Report 2021. Northern Territory Government, Darwin, Northern Territory. https://cmc.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/986728/Everyone-together-aboriginal-affairs-strategy-progress-report2021.pdf, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Anon. 2013. The Burra Charter. The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013. <https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf>, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Australian Citizen Science Association. 2022. Australian Citizen Science Association website. <https://citizenscience.org.au/>, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Clark, R. N. and Stankey, G. H. 1979. The recreation opportunity spectrum: a framework for planning, management, and research. Gen. Tech. Rep. PNW-GTR-098. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station. 32 p. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/treearch/pubs/6014>, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Department of Energy and Environment. 2017. National Reserve System Strategic Directions Forum Discussion Paper 2017 (unpublished). Australian Government, Department of Energy and Environment, Canberra, ACT.
- Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet. 2019. Northern Territory Aboriginal Land Sea Action Plan 2019. Northern Territory Government, Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet, Darwin, Northern Territory. https://cmc.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/681328/land-sea-action-plan.pdf, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Dunlop M., Hilbert D.W., Ferrier S., House A., Liedloff A., Prober S.M., Smyth A., Martin T.G., Harwood T., Williams K.J., Fletcher C., and Murphy H. (2012). The Implications of Climate Change for Biodiversity Conservation and the National Reserve System: Final Synthesis. A report prepared for the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, and the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency. CSIRO Climate Adaptation Flagship, Canberra. <https://publications.csiro.au/rpr/download?pid=csiro:EP105380&dsid=DS4>, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Hoque, M.A., Lovelock, B. and Carr, A., 2020. Alleviating Indigenous Poverty through Tourism: the role of NGOs. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, pp.1-18. DOI: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09669582.2020.1860070>.
- Izurieta, A., B. Sithole, N. Stacey, H. Hunter-Xenie, B. Campbell, P. Donohoe, J. Brown, and L. Wilson. 2011. Developing indicators for monitoring and evaluating joint management effectiveness in protected areas in the Northern Territory, Australia. *Ecology and Society* 16(3): 9. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5751/ES-04274-160309>.
- Leung, Yu-Fai, Spenceley, Anna, Hvenegaard, Glen, and Buckley, Ralf (Eds.). 2018. Tourism and visitor management in protected areas: Guidelines for sustainability. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 27, Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. xii + 120 pp. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2018.PAG.27.en>.
- Moore, Susan and Weiler, Betty. (2009). Tourism-protected area partnerships: stoking the fires of innovation. Moore, S.A. <http://researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/view/author/Moore,Susan.html>
- and Weiler, B. (2009) Tourism-protected area partnerships: stoking the fires of innovation. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17 (2). pp. 129-132. DOI: 10.1080/09669580802582506.
- National Parks Australia Council. 2017. Completing-Australia's-National-Reserve-System-of-Protected-Areas. <https://vnpa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Completing-Australia%E2%80%99s-National-Reserve-System-of-Protected-Areas.pdf>, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council. 2004. Directions for the National Reserve System – A Partnership Approach. Australian Government, Department of the Environment and Heritage, Canberra, ACT. <https://www.awe.gov.au/sites/default/files/env/pages/35ded9a1-0a17-47fa-a518-05f7bfe045ce/files/directions.pdf>, accessed 4 January 2022.
- NatureVest and EKO. 2014. Investing in Conservation: A landscape assessment of an emerging market. https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/InvestingInConservation_Report.pdf, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory. 2002. Public Participation in Protected Area Management Best Practice (Prepared for the Committee on National Parks and Protected Area Management - Benchmarking and Best Practice Program). Northern Territory Government, Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Northern Territory. <https://www.awe.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/public-participation.pdf>, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory. 2005. Parks and Conservation Masterplan 2005 (unpublished). Northern Territory Government, Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory, Darwin, Northern Territory.
- Parks Victoria. 2020. Healthy Parks Healthy People Framework 2020. Victoria State Government, Parks Victoria, Melbourne, Victoria. <http://www.parks.vic.gov.au/healthy-parks-healthy-people>, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships. 2020a. Best Practice Development Guidelines - Ecotourism Facilities on National Parks. Queensland Government, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Brisbane, Queensland. https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/160177/eoi-best-practice-ecotourism.pdf, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships. 2020b. Queensland Protected Area Strategy 2020-2030. Queensland Government, Brisbane, Queensland. <https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/management/plans-strategies/protected-area-strategy>, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. 2014. A Masterplan for Queensland Parks and Forests 2014-2025. Queensland Government, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Brisbane, Queensland. <https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/management/plans-strategies/master-plan>, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Territory Natural Resource Management. 2021a. Arid Lands Region - Territory Natural Resource Management Plan 2021-2025. Territory Natural Resource Management, Darwin, Northern Territory. https://6ff64190-3227-4a37-bba1-3bb4ac9db214.filesusr.com/ugd/da28f0_d82ca6f828a2409e9d530530b31cd8fa.pdf, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Territory Natural Resource Management. 2021b. Gulf Savanna Region - Territory Natural Resource Management Plan 2021-2025. Territory Natural Resource Management, Darwin, Northern Territory. https://6ff64190-3227-4a37-bba1-3bb4ac9db214.filesusr.com/ugd/da28f0_5b99315db0394d64b1ccdd60220b2420.pdf, accessed 4 January 2022.
- Territory Natural Resource Management. 2021c. Tablelands Region - Territory Natural Resource Management Plan 2021-2025.

Territory Natural Resource Management, Darwin, Northern Territory. https://6ff64190-3227-4a37-bba1-3bb4ac9db214.filesusr.com/ugd/da28f0_da5771efa1d54541a116dd3ca809dc06.pdf , accessed 4 January 2022.

Territory Natural Resource Management. 2021d. Top End Region - Territory Natural Resource Management Plan 2021-2025. Territory Natural Resource Management, Darwin, Northern Territory. https://6ff64190-3227-4a37-bba1-3bb4ac9db214.filesusr.com/ugd/da28f0_0274bf40ba67495897e66097637d3ca9.pdf , accessed 4 January 2022.

Tourism NT. 2016. Master Plan - Mountain biking in the Northern Territory 2016. Tourism NT, Darwin, Northern Territory. <https://www.tourismnt.com.au/system/files/uploads/files/2020/mountain-biking-master-plan.pdf> , accessed 4 January 2022.

Tourism NT. 2019. Northern Territory Tourism Industry Strategy 2030. Northern Territory Government, Darwin, Northern Territory. <https://www.tourismnt.com.au/system/files/uploads/files/2020/nt-tourism-industry-strategy-2030-full-report.pdf> , accessed 4 January 2022.

Tourism NT. 2020a. Northern Territory Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020 – 2030. Tourism NT, Darwin, Northern Territory. <https://www.tourismnt.com.au/system/files/uploads/files/2020/aboriginal-tourism-strategy.pdf> , accessed 4 January 2022.

Tourism NT. 2020b. Destination Management Plan Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges 2020. Tourism NT, Darwin, Northern Territory. <https://www.tourismnt.com.au/research-strategies/strategies/destination-management-plans/alice-springs-macdonnell-ranges-region> , accessed 4 January 2022.

Tourism NT. 2020c. Destination Management Plan Barkly Region 2020. Tourism NT, Darwin, Northern Territory. <https://www.tourismnt.com.au/system/files/uploads/files/2020/Barkly%20Region%20Destination%20Management%20Plan.pdf> , accessed 4 January 2022.

Tourism NT. 2020d. Destination Management Plan Big Rivers Region 2020. Tourism NT, Darwin, Northern Territory. <https://www.tourismnt.com.au/system/files/uploads/files/2020/Big%20Rivers%20Region%20Destination%20Management%20Plan.pdf> , accessed 4 January 2022.

Tourism NT. 2020e. Destination Management Plan Lasseter Region 2020. Tourism NT, Darwin, Northern Territory. <https://www.tourismnt.com.au/system/files/uploads/files/2020/Lasseter%20Region%20Destination%20Management%20Plan.pdf> , accessed 4 January 2022.

Tourism NT. 2021a. East Arnhem Land Destination Management Plan 2021-2031. Tourism NT, Darwin, Northern Territory. https://www.tourismnt.com.au/system/files/uploads/files/2021/DMP%20East%20Arnhem%20-%20Full_1.pdf , accessed 4 January 2022.

Tourism NT. 2021b. Northern Territory Drive Tourism Strategy 2021-2030. Tourism NT, Darwin, Northern Territory. https://www.tourismnt.com.au/system/files/uploads/files/2021/TNT_Drive%20Strategy%20-%20Web.pdf , accessed 4 January 2022.

Tourism NT. In development. Destination Management Plan Greater Darwin Region (in development 2022). Tourism NT, Darwin, Northern Territory. <https://www.tourismnt.com.au/research-strategies/destination-management-plans/greater-darwin-region> , accessed 4 January 2022.

TRC Tourism 2012. Best Practice Guidelines for Eco-Opportunities in Protected and Natural Areas. TRC Tourism, Recreation and Conservation. <https://www.ecotourism.org.au/assets/Resources-Hub-Expression-of-Interest/best-practice-guideline-for-eco-opportunities-in-protected-and-natural-areas.pdf> , accessed 4 January 2022.

TRC Tourism. Unpublished. Northern Territory Parks Tourism and Recreation Masterplan 2014 (unpublished). TRC Tourism, Recreation and Conservation. <https://trctourism.com/portfolio-items/northern-territory-parks-tourism-and-recreation-master-plan/> , accessed 4 January 2022.

Verschuuren B., Mallarach J-M., Bernbaum, E., Spoon J., Brown S., Borde R., Brown J., Calamia M., Mitchell N., Infield M and Lee E. (2021). Cultural and spiritual significance of nature. Guidance for protected and conserved area governance and management. Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series No. 32, Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. XVI + 88pp. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2021.PAG.32.en>.

World Bank Group. 2021. World Bank Group Collaborative Management Partnerships Toolkit. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/562331632845684383/pdf/Collaborative-Management-Partnership-Toolkit.pdf> , accessed 4 January 2022.

ACRONYMS

2WD	Two wheel drive
4WD	Four wheel drive
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019 – SARS-CoV2
Northern Territory 30 Year Parks Masterplan 2023-2053	Parks Masterplan
Territory	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
Parks estate	Northern Territory Government parks estate
Parks and reserves	Northern Territory Government parks and reserves
Parks and Wildlife	Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory
TPWCA	<i>Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976</i>
EPBCA	<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)</i>
Traditional Owners	Aboriginal Traditional Owners





NT PARKS MASTERPLAN 2023 - 2053

Department of
ENVIRONMENT, PARKS AND WATER SECURITY

NT.GOV.AU/PARKS