SECTION 2: ABOUT US

Overview

The vision of the Commission is to connect people with the unique natural and cultural values of the Territory. There are clear links between people’s experiences of nature, feeling connected with nature and becoming advocates for conservation. Moreover, there are demonstrated health benefits associated with nature-based recreation.

Therefore, one of the key priorities of the Parks and Wildlife Commission is to provide the community and our visitors opportunities to immerse in nature, experience culture, value our wildlife and enjoy the serenity of the Northern Territory environment.

Our parks and reserves lie largely within the intact landscape of the Northern Territory. The Territory environment offers lots of opportunities for effective conservation efforts. However, the Commission cannot do it alone. We rely on working with the community and with other agencies and partners to enhance management and conservation efforts to ensure a conservation estate that is well managed and balances use with protection for the benefit of all Territorians.
Strategic Objectives

Our Vision
Connecting people with the Territory's unique nature and culture.

Our Purpose
To deliver high quality and sustainable environmental, cultural and visitor outcomes for Northern Territory parks, reserves and wildlife.
Strengthen local communities and economies by recognising that environmental and cultural resources are vital to delivering positive social, sustainable and economic outcomes.

Goal 1: Parks for Wildlife
Strategies:
• Manage and conserve parks according to their unique natural value.
• Minimise threats to biodiversity health.

Goal 2: Parks for People
Strategies:
• Expand opportunities for recreation and education in parks and reserves.
• Grow sustainable nature and culture-based tourism.
• Enhance the quality and safety of the visitor experience.
• Protect and care for the natural and cultural assets within parks and reserves.

Our Values
- Respect
- Accountability
- Impartiality
- Ethical Practice
- Diversity
- Commitment to Service
Goal 3: Strong Partnerships
Strategies:
• Develop meaningful opportunities to help care for and invest in our parks and wildlife.
• Build and strengthen relationships with the community.
• Strengthen Aboriginal partnerships and improve joint management.

Goal 4: Living with Wildlife
Strategies:
• Promote public responsibility and stewardship for living with wildlife.
• Minimise harm from crocodiles.
• Deliver effective wildlife management programs.

Goal 5: Our Organisation
Strategies:
• Inspire and support a collaborative and respectful workplace.
• Continue to improve business processes and streamline key internal systems.
• Build and enhance strategic leadership and workforce capability and diversity.
• Ensure a safe working environment in both office and field operations.

Our Organisational Structure
Andrew Bridges
Andrew began his career with the Commission at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in 1981. Since this time, Andrew has worked extensively throughout the Central Australian region.

Through his career, Andrew has seen the evolution of protected areas management from a model that focused on protecting parks from people, to a model that works with people to protect parks for people. A model that encompasses social, economic and environmental benefits for local communities, including supporting jobs and economic wellbeing, and providing high quality sustainable experiences that build a love and appreciation of what the natural world has to offer.

Andrew's passion is to help connect people with the wonders of the natural world.

Amanda Moore
Amanda has worked in the Northern Territory Public Sector for the past 30 years. She commenced an Administrative Traineeship in 1985 with the Department of Transport and Works, transferring within the agency to gain experience across all areas of business support over the following five years. Amanda then transferred to the Department of the Chief Minister, working across a range of areas, including payroll, staff development, human resources management, electoral, the Chief Minister's Office and youth affairs.

Amanda commenced with the Parks and Wildlife Commission in June 2000 as the Manager of Secretariat. Since this time, Amanda has held a number of positions including, Manager Concessions and Permits, Business Officer Parks North, Manager Business Administration and Director Business Services.

Amanda has held the role of Director Business Services since November 2012.

Bryan Harty
Bryan has been employed in the Northern Territory Public Sector with the Parks and Wildlife Commission for just under four years. Prior to taking on the role of Director George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens, Bryan was employed as the Indigenous Employment Program Coordinator with the agency.

Bryan has a diverse employment background, having worked for Charles Darwin University (12 years), the Northern Land Council (4 years) and Parks Australia at Kakadu (2 years) and Booderee Botanic Gardens (1 year). Bryan holds a Bachelor of Science (Environmental Science), an Associate Diploma of Applied Science (Tropical Horticulture), Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching, and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. As such, Bryan has extensive knowledge and experience in protected areas management and Indigenous employment and training.

Bryan has held the role of Director George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens for the past two years.
Chris Day

Chris began his career with the Parks and Wildlife Commission in 1981 as a T1 Ranger. Since then, Chris has worked at a number of parks throughout the Central Australian region, including: Alice springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve, and remote parks (2 years); Finke Gorge National Park (7 years); Watarrka National Park (4 years); and Senior District Ranger, and Chief District Ranger for Central, East and Barkly Parks (5 years); and West District Parks for 10 years.

In addition to his extensive experience in protected areas management, Chris also has considerable expertise in joint management, training and development of staff, visitor management, interpretation, and community engagement.

Chris thrives in the diversity of work provided by the Commission and believes that he has the best office in the world.

Chris has held the role of Director Central Australian Parks for the past three years.

Kristen Appel

Kristen Appel has been employed by the Parks and Wildlife Commission for the past 31 years, having started with the agency as a Trainee Ranger which included a six month placement at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, when it was still managed by the Northern Territory Government. Kristen has worked across all regions of the Northern Territory mainly in Park management, including Watarrka National Park, Trephina Gorge Nature Park, Arltunga Historical Reserve, Keep River National Park, Nitmiluk National Park, Litchfield National Park and all of the Darwin Parks.

Kristen has been Acting Director Wildlife Operations for the past three years.

Kristen has been involved in the International Ranger Federation since 1994. She is also a member of the Northern Territory Ranger Association. The Federation and associated Ranger Association have played an important role in recognising the role of rangers, while enabling rangers to build professional networks, assist with professional development and provide social and professional enrichment for rangers in isolated locations.

Mac Moyses

Mac first arrived in the Territory as a 20 year old when he started a 14 year career as a Ranger, mainly across the Central Australian region. During this time, he spent a year working in the South-West National Park in Tasmania on a ranger exchange program. Mac moved into the Planning Services team in 1999 and has been Director of Planning Services for the past six years.

Mac has a Bachelor of Applied Science in Wildlife and Park Management and a Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Leadership.

Mac has a keen interest in planning, management effectiveness and joint management and brings many years of experience in this area to the Commission. Mac also has considerable experience and knowledge in park operations planning, working with complex legislation to achieve organisational objectives, land administration, strategic planning and policy development.
Mark Crummy
Mark has lived in Darwin for almost 30 years. He is a well-travelled Territorian and was the co-owner of local award winning safari business Odyssey Safaris for 13 years. He joined the NT Public Service in 2004 as Manager of Destination Marketing with Tourism NT where he also held the positions of Manager Trade Engagement and Director of Global Distribution. In 2010 he joined the Parks and Wildlife Commission in the position of Director Tourism and Visitor Services. 2012 saw Mark return to Tourism NT for two years as Regional Director Top End. In July 2014 he re-joined the Parks and Wildlife Commission as Director Tourism and Visitor Engagement where he oversees the Community Engagement; Tourism Development; and Interpretation and Communications units.
Mark has served as a Board Member of Nitmiluk National Park for the past five years and he is a Board Member of the Industry Training Advisory Council CHARTTES. He has also served a number of years on the Executive Committee of the Regional Tourism Organisation, Tourism Top End in the capacity of President, Vice-President and Board member.

Mike Deegan
Mike started the Northern Territory Public Sector in 1974 with the Department of Transport and Works, where he completed an apprenticeship, and over time, worked his way up within the organisation to hold a number of positions. These included Tradesman, Leading Hand, Procurement Officer, Plant Inspector, Workplace Supervisor, and Senior Plant Inspector. Mike later moved to the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Services as a Senior Mechanic before joining the Parks and Wildlife Commission in 1989. In the Commission Mike has held a number of positions, including Technical Officer Fleet and Radio, Manager Fleet and Repairs and Maintenance, and Manager Technical Services. Mike holds a Graduate Certificate in Public Sector Management.
Mike has been a member of the Leadership Team since 2006 and Director Technical Services for the past three years.
Mike brings vast knowledge to the organisation in terms of asset acquisition and management, contract management, procurement procedures, infrastructure maintenance, and budget planning and prioritisation. Mike’s experience, acquired over many years, is also a significant asset to the Commission.

Neva McCartney
Neva commenced employment with the NT Public Sector in 1994 with the Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory. Neva spent 12 years in the Katherine region with the Parks and Wildlife Commission before moving to Darwin in 2006 to pursue a career in natural resource management and policy development in other divisions of the former Department. Neva returned to the Parks and Wildlife Commission in 2011 as Director Park Operations.
Neva has qualifications in park management, public sector graduate certificate in public sector management, and has extensive knowledge and experience across a range of areas, including policy design and implementation, natural resource management, business management, contract management and Government processes. Neva graduated with a Masters in Public Administration in 2013.
Neva has been employed in the role of Director Northern Australian Parks for the past three years.
Paul Ngala Ah Chee
Paul grew up in Alice Springs, where he is well-known as a musician and business man, who specialises in cultural tourism and management. Paul has skills across a broad range of areas, which is demonstrated in the wide range of roles that he has played over many years.

Paul has played a key role in the development of cultural tourism in Central Australia and has also worked with ‘Enterprise Connect’, an initiative driven by the Australian Government Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, which provided specialist knowledge to businesses to drive productivity and success. Paul has also held positions on the boards of the South Australian Museum and the Australian Tourist Commission over many years.

Paul took on the role of Director of the Alice Springs Desert Park in 2012. His extensive networks throughout the Northern Territory, and knowledge and leadership in cultural understanding and appreciation are significant assets to the Parks and Wildlife Commission.

Shael Martin
Shael has worked with the NT Public Sector intermittently since 1994. She has worked across a number of different agencies including the Department of Transport and Works, the Power and Water Corporation, the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory, the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment, the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport, and at the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment. Shael returned to the Parks and Wildlife Commission again in 2012.

Shael has a strong background in human resources management, community development planning, and social development, gained through her considerable experience across a broad range of roles within in the Northern Territory, as well as through completion of a Bachelor of Psychology and Masters in Development Management.

Shael has been Director Territory Wildlife Park since October 2012.
Our Divisions

The Parks and Wildlife Commission is made up of 10 business divisions, including Northern Australian Parks, Central Australian Parks, Planning Services, Technical Services, Tourism and Visitor Engagement, Business Services, Wildlife Operations, the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens, the Territory Wildlife Park, and the Alice Springs Desert Park. Each of these units is individually and collectively responsible for delivering to the Commission’s strategic goals and in ensuring the delivery of high quality environmental, cultural, tourism and visitor services.

Northern Australian Parks

The Northern Australian Parks Division is responsible for overseeing the management and protection of the parks estate in the Top End, including the Katherine region. This Division undertakes the strategic management of feral animals, fire and weeds across the parks estate, promotes visitor activities on our parks and undertakes biodiversity monitoring programs in partnership with scientists from the Department of Land Resource Management. Northern Australian Parks staff work with Traditional Owners to deliver joint management programs on jointly managed parks across the region.

Central Australian Parks

The Central Australian Parks Division is responsible for overseeing the management and protection of parks and reserves in the southern region, including the Barkly District. The Division implements on-ground management programs for fire, weeds and feral animals, biodiversity surveys and promotes visitor activities to enhance the natural, recreational, cultural and tourism values of our parks and reserves. Central Australian Parks staff work with traditional owners to deliver joint management programs on jointly managed parks across the region.

Planning Services

The Planning Services Division provides professional advice, support and services for the Commission. The Division has care and responsibility for park planning and policy, land administration, spatial data management, performance monitoring and reporting and supporting major programs such as joint management, at the policy level. Through planning teams and collaboration with other Divisions, Planning Services also adds value to the forward works program. To be effective, Planning Services focuses on positive internal and external relationships, and aims especially to give excellent service and support to operational staff.

Tourism and Visitor Engagement

This Division is made up of teams that oversee park interpretation, community engagement, and tourism development. This Division assists the Commission to effectively manage parks and reserves throughout the Northern Territory, with the view to improving visitor experiences, promoting tourism opportunities and experiences, and successfully engaging the local community through education and events. This Division is also responsible for developing new and emerging opportunities to enhance the visitor experience on parks and reserves.
Wildlife Operations
The Wildlife Operations Division balances the management and protection of our native wildlife with the community throughout the Territory. This ranges from crocodile management for public safety, enabling the community to care for wildlife through rehabilitation or as pets and the provision of advice and management of native and pest animals. In particular, the Division is responsible for providing opportunities for community participation in wildlife-related programs and opportunities, enhancing community awareness for wildlife management practices, providing advice and education to the community and stakeholders, protecting public safety through delivering the problem crocodile management program consistently, and working with partners and the community to achieve our goals.

The Division takes a lead role in improving the legislation and regulations to reflect current and future wildlife practices and our operational needs which will lead to efficiencies by reducing the administration burden of the current permit system and improve service to the community.

Business Services
The Business Services Division leads and manages the Commission’s business, financial, human resource, legal services, secretariat, permits and concessions, capacity building and Indigenous engagement, and overseeing the function of boards and committee services across the Northern Territory. The Division is responsible for providing strategic and operational advice to the Executive Leadership Team and Senior Managers in the development and implementation of policies and procedures that support and facilitate the delivery of these programs whilst ensuring good governance systems are implemented and maintained.

Technical Services
The Technical Services Division manages the Commission’s capital works, minor new works and repairs and maintenance programs, oversees fleet management and staff housing requirements, and monitors and reports on portable and attractive assets. This small team delivers projects using evidence based decision making processes that support delivery and development of effective asset management for the agency. Where necessary, this Division facilitates effective negotiations that will enhance the likelihood of developing appropriate and cost efficient/effective projects, within a tight financial framework.

George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens
The Gardens provide an educational opportunity for visitors to view unique collections of local and exotic plants including palms, cycads and boabs. The living collection includes species that are uncommon or threatened in their original habitat. The location of the Gardens in close proximity to Darwin means that the site also provides an important recreational location for tourists and local people to enjoy. The George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens support tourism by attracting and encouraging visitors to extend their stay. The Gardens provide a site for a number of significant social and cultural events such as the Darwin Festival, Tropical Garden Spectacular and many private functions such as weddings. The popular Eva’s Cafe operates from the heritage-listed Wesleyan Church.
Territory Wildlife Park
The Territory Wildlife Park aims to provide a quality experience to visitors through presentation of flora and fauna in a variety of Top End habitats and ecosystems. Specifically, the Park works to connect visitors with nature through authentic encounters and exciting experiences. The Park delivers high-quality education programs for its visitors and develops and promotes conservation strategies and initiatives to influence responsible community behaviour towards the Territory environment, inspiring change and long-term action by developing environmental awareness. The Territory Wildlife Park has a particular goal of continuing to develop programs to promote conservation of threatened species and plays a central role in facilitating and advocating conservation research programs in Northern Australia.

Alice Springs Desert Park
The Alice Springs Desert Park plays a key role in showcasing the exceptional diversity of Central Australia’s unique flora and fauna. These facilities provide opportunities for the community and tourists to immerse themselves amongst the desert’s plants and animals in a natural setting that is educational, interactive and inspiring for the visiting public. In addition to the significant role this Park plays in education and awareness-raising, this Park also presents its exhibits and presentations with interpretative information that entwines the significance of Indigenous culture to this region. The Park also provides invaluable conservation outcomes through specialised breeding programs and cooperative research projects. The Park provides an exceptional recreational and tourist experience and promotes visitor understanding, respect and enjoyment of the Territory’s natural environment.
The Year that was . . . Highlights from 2014-15

2014-15 was a busy and productive year for the Commission during which we made significant inroads into delivering against our corporate goals. In the past 12 months we have focused on improving the visitor experience, providing information and messages around living safely with crocodiles and have worked closely with our community partners to offer and develop programs and activities that encourage people to safely enjoy our parks and reserves. The highlights illustrate some of these activities and events and celebrate our successes.

Expression of Interest for Tourism Investment Opportunities on Parks

This year, for the first time in the Territory’s history, the Parks and Wildlife Commission called for Expressions of Interest for Tourism Investment Opportunities on parks and reserves. The intent of the program is to grow nature and cultural-based tourism within parks and reserves through partnerships with investors to:

• create high quality sustainable tourism products, experiences and activities that offer visitors something unique;

• enhance the Territory’s reputation as a leading destination for quality nature and culture based experiences;

• support economic growth and long-term job creation particularly in regional and remote areas; and

• maximise public benefit.

Through this process, 57 submissions were received detailing 76 concepts. While many of these submissions are still in development, assessment or awaiting presentation to relevant Joint Management Committees for decision, there are several success stories through this process:

The Commission received approval for the establishment of a commercial ‘high ropes adventure course’ to be constructed at Howard Springs Nature Park. Construction for this will begin in 2015-16.

The Commission has approved three concessions for business opportunities at Litchfield National Park, Howard Springs Nature Park and Berry Springs Nature Park. These new business opportunities will create new experiences for visitors and add value to the visitor facilities available at each of these locations.

This is an exciting time for the Parks and Wildlife Commission as it works with local business and commercial operators to strive for better, more unique and exciting opportunities to sustainably develop parks and reserves into the future.
World Parks Congress

The World Parks Congress (WPC) is an international event organised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which is held every 10 years. The theme of the WPC in 2014 was ‘parks, people, planet: inspiring solutions’ and was co-hosted by NSW Parks and Parks Australia. In 2014, the Congress gathered together some 6000 delegates from 170 countries throughout the world.

The 2014 World Parks Congress had significant focus on the extensive benefits that parks provide – whether local urban parks, community parks or national parks – as a means of promoting health and well-being, supporting human life, and sustaining nature and biodiversity for the future of the planet.

33 employees from the Parks and Wildlife Commission attended the World Parks Congress. This included two Indigenous traditional owners of Garig Gunak Barlu National Park and one employee who attended as a volunteer at the event. This equated to attendance by 10% of the Commission’s workforce.

The World Parks Congress was a fantastic opportunity for Commission staff to learn from and network with people from all over the world. It was an exceptional event and provided the Commission with inspiration for new opportunities moving forward.

Mountain Biking

Mountain biking is the fastest-growing form of nature-based recreation in Australia and around the world. Due to its popularity mountain biking has become a tourism sector in its own right.

The establishment of an extensive mountain bike trail system in the Alice Springs township area has been enthusiastically welcomed by the local community as well as visiting mountain bikers. The network consists of 28 kilometres of trail that makes up four connected loops beginning at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historic Precinct. Cyclists can then elect to ride three, four, eight or 11 kilometres, or a combination of these loops.
The Trails have provided mountain bikers with new opportunities to experience the natural environment, to participate in active recreational pursuits, and to explore parks and reserves throughout the region. The Trails have also contributed to the reputation of Alice Springs as a key location for mountain biking.

The Alice Springs Mountain Bike Trails are attracting visitors from across Australia, and the next stages, which are due for completion in 2015-16, will likely see further growth and development of mountain biking in this region.

Additionally, in 2014-15, bike trails were formalised in Charles Darwin National Park to create new experiences for mountain bikers in the Top End region. The network has been designed to national standards and has the potential to attract national and international trail riders to the region. Further trails are planned for Casuarina Coastal Reserve during 2015-16 to further enhance the mountain biking experience in the Top End.
Be Crocwise

In 2014-15, the Parks and Wildlife Commission reviewed the Be Crocwise program. One of the key outcomes of the review was the need to better target ‘high risk’ audiences, specifically young males aged between 18-35 as well as Indigenous communities. In 2014-15, the Commission developed a television commercial featuring the Parramatta Eels, which focuses on safety when fishing. This is supported through staff attendance at various community events and forums to raise awareness within fishing, boating and camping groups.

To better engage Indigenous communities, the Commission acknowledged the need to develop an educational tool using appealing messaging and music to specifically reach this group. It was also recognised that the tool needed to address the changes to the crocodile populations over the past 40 years. Where it may have been previously safe to swim is not the case any longer, so the tool needed to specifically focus on addressing this issue.

The Be Crocwise clip was developed and has been hugely successful on Facebook and is continuing to gain significant interest within the mainstream and Indigenous communities.

The spoken part of the Be Crocwise clip has been translated into five Indigenous languages, including Kriol, Anindilyakwa (Groote Eylandt), Yolngu Matha (North-East Arnhem Land), Tiwi and Murrinypatha (Wadeye). In addition, the Commission elected to have the entire song translated into Kriol. It is anticipated that the use of translations will further enhance the messaging and promote crocodile awareness and safety to a broader component of the community – from young children through to adults.
International Crocodile Management Delegations  
– Timor Leste and Singapore  
In 2014-15, the Parks and Wildlife Commission hosted separate delegations from Timor Leste and Singapore for the purpose of sharing its crocodile management and education with neighbouring countries. These delegations focused on sharing information, generating new knowledge and approaches, identifying gaps in capacity and experience, and providing opportunities for officers from other countries to gain invaluable training.
Heritage Week at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station

On Saturday 11 April 2015, the Alice Springs Telegraph Station hosted the Heritage Week Open Day and markets. 28 stalls were set up featuring a variety of wares from food stalls selling cakes and ice cream and hot food to those selling jewellery, cards, music and medicine to art from local community art centres. There were also a number of community organisations including the National Trust, Central Australian Aviation Museum and six ‘not for profit’ groups including Birdlife Australia, NT Ranger Association and the Rural Fire Brigade. Historic displays showcasing spinning, morse code, blacksmithing, lace making and re-enactments in period costume all added colour and realism to the Telegraph Station which hosted over 850 visitors.

The day was an outstanding success with many of the attendees expressing their joy and gratitude which was felt on the day as well as the high praise and comments the Commission has since received.
Garig Gunak Barlu National Park
Finalist in the Keep Australia Beautiful National Awards

The Annual Clean Beaches Program awards communities which actively work for a cleaner, more sustainable coastal environment. Awards are presented to local councils, volunteers, surf lifesaving clubs, rangers and other community groups who implement initiatives that care for and protect habitats, educate the community, reduce litter, preserve and value culture and heritage, and support tourism.

In 2014-15, Garig Gunak Barlu, on the Cobourg Peninsula won the Northern Territory Clean Beaches Award for the pristine beaches. The Park was subsequently entered into the National Award as a finalist.

NT Ranger Awards

The Northern Territory Ranger Awards recognise the valuable contribution Northern Territory Rangers play in managing conservation areas, protecting biodiversity, and providing visitors with unique and memorable experiences. These awards are open to any ranger in the Northern Territory, including apprentices, trainees, and rangers working for the Australian Government and Indigenous ranger organisations. It’s a great opportunity to reflect on those rangers that deserve recognition for their work above and beyond the call of duty.

In 2014-15, 51 nominations were received for rangers throughout the Northern Territory, including a nomination for a ranger who travelled six hours in the other direction to attend a Joint Management meeting while his wife was in labour; a ranger who stopped at a campsite and helped an interstate couple build a fire from scratch because they had been unable to get one started; and of the willingness and dedication that one team demonstrated over many days to remove a single feral cat from an endangered mala wallaby enclosure.
Minister’s Award for Outstanding Team Achievement
  Wildlife Operations Team, Darwin

Minister’s Award for Outstanding Frontline Achievement
  Ms Christine Michaels-Ellis

Minister’s Award for Outstanding Personal Achievement
  Mr Shaun Evans

Ranger of the Year Central Australia
  Mr Peter Beddows

Ranger of the Year Barkly-Katherine-Victoria River District
  Ms Christine Michaels-Ellis

Ranger of the Year Top End
  Mr David McLachlan

Minister’s Encouragement Award
  Alice Springs Telegraph Station Rangers
Territory Wildlife Park - Chief Minister’s Award winners

In 2014, the Territory Wildlife Park was the recipient of the prestigious Chief Minister’s Award for ‘Excellence in Partnering’. This Award reflects the significant efforts of the Park in securing and nurturing its relationship with the Berry Springs Primary School, which allows students from Preschool to Year six undertake study relating to science by participating in learning activities at the Territory Wildlife Park.
Alice Springs Desert Park – Brolga Award Winners

The Brolga Awards recognise tourism businesses that deliver excellence in every area of their operation. A recipient of a Brolga Award is therefore regarded as representing the best tourism product or service in the Northern Territory.

In 2014, the Alice Springs Desert Park was recipient of the ‘Best Major Tourism Attraction’ award for the Northern Territory. This award recognises the efforts of every individual, irrespective of their role in the Park, in delivering unbeatable experiences for visitors. Added to this is the remarkable effort of the Desert Park in increasing its self-generated revenue by 45% over the past two years.
Goal 1: Parks for Wildlife

**Manage and conserve parks according to their unique natural value.**

Five Islands in the lower Victoria River and Turtle Point, north of the Keep River were transferred to the Commission for care, control and management.

Two Integrated Conservation Strategies for Litchfield and Nitmiluk National Parks were completed with a further two in preparation to map key biodiversity values with measurable targets over five and ten year timeframes.

Completed the preparation of Park Report Cards for the key parks across the Northern Territory to report on the effectiveness of conservation and visitor programs.

**Minimise threats to biodiversity health.**

The George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens partnered with the Australian Botanic Gardens, Kew and Kakadu National Park as part of the Australian Seed Bank Collection project to collect and propagate threatened plant species.

The Territory Wildlife Park partnered with the National Environmental Research Program Scientists and Parks Australia to begin a project to undertake breeding of Northern Quolls at the Territory Wildlife Park to reintroduce into Kakadu.

Repaired a breached section of the barrage at Melacca Swamp. The area has economic, cultural and biological significance and these repairs will prevent saltwater intrusion into the freshwater wetlands.

Identified and protected eight Flatback Turtle *Natator depressus* nests in Darwin Urban Parks and conducted four Sea Turtle conservation talks at Casuarina Coastal Reserve. 127 turtle hatchlings were released with over 760 members of the Darwin community.

In collaboration with partners conducted strategic invasive species management programs in central Australia as part of the Red Centre Biodiversity Fund. Conducted invasive species management programs in the Gulf, Savannah and Northern regions across the reserve network.
Participated with the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network and Charles Darwin University Scientists in a long term world-wide research project into climate change at Litchfield National Park.

**Goal 2: Parks for People**

**Expand opportunities for recreation and education in parks and reserves.**

The draft Parks Tourism and Recreation Masterplan was progressively developed in collaboration with stakeholders and is nearing finalisation.

**Prepared Visitor Experience Development Plans for Litchfield National Park and Casuarina Coastal Reserve**

Upgraded the walking paths at Casuarina Coastal Reserve to the City of Darwin standards and so that the pathways better fit within the Darwin City Council urban bike path network. In addition, the Commission has installed bike racks at locations throughout the Reserve to enable cyclists to make better use of the Reserve.

The Commission’s face to face interpretation program was delivered across 20 parks and reserves Territory wide over the 2014-15 year. Rangers delivered walks, talks, slide shows and campfire chats – providing some 456 scheduled activities to approximately 7585 visitors, averaging 16.6 visitors per activity.

Commission staff participated in and co-ordinated a variety of events including information stalls, community activities on parks, school presentations and show displays across the Northern Territory. Overall it is estimated that over 30 635 people were exposed to park and wildlife messages through community engagement activities in 2014-15.

**Grow sustainable nature and culture-based tourism.**

Implemented an Expression of Interest process for tourism investment opportunities across the park network. A total of 57 submissions were received.
Facilitated the introduction of a variety of new visitor experiences to the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens including Segway Tours, a Healthy Holiday Fun program, Playtime in the Gardens, monthly Territory Made Markets and a pop up Bamboo Bar. This has resulted in an increase of visitors to the Gardens by 23%.


Restored Limestone Gorge campground access in Judbarra / Gregory National Park following a six year closure.

Undertook remediation of asbestos in urban parks and reserves including the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens to ensure safety of visitors and employees.

Funded over $5.5 million of Minor New Works to enhance visitor and employee safety in parks and reserves including upgrading mountain bike trails at Charles Darwin National Park and Alice Springs Telegraph Station, pedestrian pathways, footbridges at Litchfield National Park, pool access at Bitter Springs, boat ramp repairs and installation of a radio telemetry system on the Larapinta Trail to monitor drinking water tank levels.

Funded $5.6 million for Repairs and Maintenance of infrastructure across parks and reserves throughout the Northern Territory. This includes repairs and maintenance of regional and remote areas, where activities generate job opportunities and employment for local people, including Indigenous people.

Extended and upgraded camping amenities at Butterfly Falls in Limmen National Park. This included the creation of additional camp sites, a loop road and parking bays.

Introduced an on-line booking system for walkers for the Jatbula Trail in Nitmiluk National Park allowing a streamlined allocation of spaces and improved visitor experience.

Enhance the quality and safety of the visitor experience.
In partnership with the NT Police, the Commission conducted an intensive community education and safety program over the Easter long weekend at Litchfield National Park and Tree Point Conservation Reserve to address anti-social behaviour and minimise the disturbance to other visitors enjoying the park.


Partnered with local Landcare, Friends, Advisory Groups, community organisations (Friends of Larapinta, Larrakia Rangers, Conservation Volunteers, Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group) and government agencies (US Marines, Department of Corrections) to deliver ongoing conservation and visitor amenity programs and projects in parks and reserves.

Provided $200 000 for the ongoing management of the Olive Pink Botanic Gardens. The Gardens are on an important recreational site for local Alice Springs residents, while also ensuring the protection and preservation of threatened, rare, endemic and culturally significant central Australian plant species.

The Territory Wildlife Park won the Chief Minister’s Award for Excellence in Partnering in conjunction with Berry Springs Primary School.

Goal 3: Strong Partnerships

Develop meaningful opportunities to help care for and invest in our parks and wildlife.
Commenced a Green Army Project in partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia at Litchfield National Park. The project aimed to eradicate and control the spread of Gamba Grass within the Tabletop area of the Park. Green Army participants undertook works for a period of 6 months on tasks such as weed control, weed survey, walking track maintenance, fencing and fauna and flora surveys. The Green Army team has made a significant contribution to the management of Category A & B noxious weeds.

**Build and strengthen relationships with the community.**

The Commission’s Show display was designed, produced and presented across the four regions. Approximately 12,824 visitors enjoyed the displays. The Commission’s displays were extremely popular with visitors and took out ‘Best Government Display’ in all regions, with the Alice Springs Display also winning ‘Best Overall Display’.

The Territory Wildlife Park facilitated a Pop Up Zoo to commemorate National Threatened Species Day at the Darwin Waterfront and hosted Christmas markets at the Park to showcase the work of local crafts people and artisans and support local producers and engage the community. The Territory Wildlife Park celebrated 25 years with a special birthday party and birthday themed weekend. Over 3000 locals attended the park and enjoyed the festivities.

**Strengthen Aboriginal partnerships and improve Joint Management.**

Provided $1.8 million for lease payments to Aboriginal Lands Trusts for Aboriginal owned, jointly managed parks. These funds benefit Indigenous people in regional and remote areas.

Allocated $120,000 to both the Central Land Council and the Northern Land Council to support joint management of parks and reserves throughout the Northern Territory.

Completed a cultural heritage map for Limmen National Park in consultation with traditional owners.

**Goal 4: Living with Wildlife**

Promote public responsibility and stewardship for living with wildlife.

Allocated a $50,000 for grant funding to wildlife carer organisations for the collection, care and rehabilitation of injured and orphaned wildlife in regional centres throughout the Territory. The collection service for these communities assists in the protection and humane treatment of injured native animals.
Developed Carer Guidelines for 11 native species to assist wildlife carers in the care, rehabilitation and release of injured and orphaned wildlife. The Guidelines were a finalist in the Chief Minister’s Awards for Excellence in the public sector.

Invested $150 000 in grant funding for the Land for Wildlife programs in the Top End and Central Australia. This program promotes ecologically sustainable clearing and building in the rural areas, increases education and awareness about the value of native flora and assists the community to enhance the natural values of their properties.

Developed a partnership with the Sporting Shooters Association Conservation Pest Management Branch to conduct feral animal management on Adelaide and Mary River Parks.

Issued 4271 permits across a range of areas including 331 permits for pig hunting and 2166 permits for waterfowl hunting. Issued a total of 1233 wildlife permits including 541 by-law permits and 466 permits to keep native wildlife.

Conducted 88 investigations following allegations against the Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act, resulting in four verbal warnings, 19 warning letters and five Penalty Infringement Notices being issued. Recorded one successful prosecution under section 66 - Offences relating to protected wildlife.

54 fauna inspections were conducted across the Northern Territory. In Darwin, 122 callouts were undertaken for the rescue and rehabilitation of wildlife including 22 for marine wildlife reported via the Wildwatch program.

Minimise harm from crocodiles.

Expended $672 000 on the proactive management of saltwater crocodiles across the Top End, including Darwin harbour, to increase community safety in and around our waterways. A total of 276 crocodiles were removed from Darwin harbour and a further 18 from the Katherine, Flora, Victoria River and Borroloola region.

Allocated $100 000 for the ‘Be Crocwise’ community education and awareness raising program, to promote safe and enjoyable experiences in our Top End waters and produced a Crocwise clip in five local languages.
Deliver effective wildlife management programs.

Issued permits for the management of 215 problem crocodiles on private land to reduce impacts on pastoral productivity or to protect public safety.

Collaborated with the Department of Land Resource Management to conduct annual crocodile population surveys on the Adelaide, Mary and Daly/Katherine Rivers in accordance with the Northern Territory Crocodile Management Plan.

Responded to approximately 3000 snake callouts via the Hotline in Darwin. Relocated 184 snakes in Katherine and 321 snakes in Alice Springs. 2% of the snakes relocated in Darwin were venomous. Whilst 13% in Katherine and 80% in Alice Springs were venomous.

Collaborated with the City of Darwin to undertake surveys of problem Pee Wees in the Darwin city area and commenced development of an educational program.

Removed and relocated a population of Red-faced Turtles *Emydura macquarii* from the Alice Springs golf course.

Contributed $82,000 to exotic ants national eradication program.

Continued to assist the City of Darwin, Litchfield Shire Council and the Alice Springs Shire Council to effectively manage feral dogs with the town municipal boundaries.

In partnership with Central Land Council, Department of Land Resource Management and private land holders, undertook three feral animal targeted shoots in the Central Australia region.

The Commission donated $2000 to the NT Field and Game Association for prizes for the waterfowl return incentive raffle. This initiative has seen an increase of permit returns of up to 12% (up from 5% two years previous) allowing for more accurate population data to be determined.
Regional Highlights

Casuarina Coastal Reserve
- NT Government announced largest-ever capital works funding to the Reserve of $10.68 million.
- Constructed Dripstone Cliffs bike track and Lee Point picnic area walking track.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Commission and Casuarina Coastal Reserve Landcare Group (CCRLG), which continued its schedule of monthly working bees, among other things.
- NT Surf Lifesaving Championships 2014 were held at Casuarina Beach.
- Participated in the fifth annual Darwin Harbour Clean-Up, which saw nearly three tonnes of rubbish removed from this coastal hotspot’s beaches and waters; also assisted CCRLG in the 2014 Great Northern Clean Up.
- Casuarina Coastal Reserve Advisory Committee completed a review of the Reserve Management Plan, which was released for public comment.

Howard Springs Nature Park
- Established a 10 year ‘Licence to Occupy’ agreement with Scouts NT over Woorabinda Youth Campground and surrounding land, covering around 17ha, providing Scouts NT with a bush setting to conduct scouting activities and youth education.
- Commenced ‘Barra Bites’ interpretive talks during the dry season for visitors to learn more about the Howard Springs waterhole and the resident Barramundi.

Charles Darwin National Park
- Provided $150 000 to upgrade mountain bike trails, allowing more people the opportunity to experience mountain biking and the Park.
- Developed and began implementing a five year Weed Management Plan, with the assistance of NT weeds experts.
- Department of Land Resource Management, Weeds Management Branch, assisted with mapping and control techniques of Gamba Grass *Andropogan gayanus* infestations.
- Gamba control efforts increased with the assistance of Darwin Off-Road Cyclists (DORC) volunteers.

Tree Point Conservation Reserve
- Developed a fact sheet to inform visitors of the Reserve’s boundaries and the various visitor opportunities in the reserve, including fishing, walking and bird watching.
- Larrakia Aboriginal Rangers continued a Poinciana *Delonix regia* control project and discovered the vulnerable Atlas Moth *Attacus atlas* breeding in the Reserve.
Garig Gunak Barlu National Park and Cobourg Marine Park

- Continued support of Dhimurru Rangers (based in Nhulunbuy) by hosting two rangers for a week-long training and development opportunity (see below article by Senior Ranger Gathapura Mununggurr).

*By Senior Ranger Gathapura Mununggurr (Dhimurru Ranger Group)*

“Last week I travelled to the Cobourg Peninsula with another senior Ranger to do some work with Parks and Wildlife. It is west from here, on the coast right at the top.

It’s still Aboriginal country but not Yolngu, they speak a different language. But they understand Yolngu language and I understand them a little bit. They do have the same skin names as us. A skin name for us is a bit like a passport - if you travel somewhere and tell them your skin name, the person that you’re visiting will understand you, where you’re from and whether you are Yirritja or Dhuwa. They will start to work out the connection, the relationship between you and the family group.

Then the country will start recognising you, so if you go hunting or fishing it will give you more wildlife and it will feel more like home.

We were there to help them maintain their recreation areas and clear their tracks that got hit by the cyclone.

We had some hard djama (work), we put up shade cloths in the recreation areas and used a grinder to take the rust off the toilets. After the rust had come off we painted them too.

We also did a lot of brush-cutting around the recreation areas and cut trees with chainsaws.

There is a lot of wildlife over there. You can see crocodile tracks everywhere because the recreation areas are close to the ocean and a swamp, so the baru just come in.

There are also banteng everywhere, a kind of cattle that came from Indonesia long time ago, and lots of pigs, wallaby and kangaroos.

The fishing there is excellent, we caught barra, jew fish and golden snapper.

The rangers there do similar work to us but their set-up is amazing, right in the middle of the bush.

It would be good to go over there and take more rangers who want to get the experience as it was amazing to learn about the countrymen and their history from long time ago. I would say that people should visit.

Mostly it was manymak to work with Parks and Wildlife and the good friendly people in their country, and feel at home.”

- Removed eight ghost nets from within the Marine Park – four more than last year – with the largest weighing more than a tonne and requiring three vessels to dislodge it from the reef.
- Australian Customs vessel ‘Roebuck Bay’ assisted with ghost net removal, helping to reduce a significant threat to native populations of turtles, Dugong *Dugong dugon*, fish and other marine wildlife
- A butterfly pupae of the Dodd’s Azure Butterfly *Ogyris iphis doddi*, not seen in the NT for 106 years was located in the Park as part of surveys conducted by Department of Land Resource Management scientists.
- Continued long-term marine and terrestrial wildlife monitoring programs, in collaboration with Department of Land Resource Management Flora, and Fauna staff.

**Litchfield National Park**
- Ministerial announcement of $10.4 million for upgrades to Litchfield National Park.
- Research by Tourism NT found that Litchfield National Park has the highest satisfaction rating of any Territory experience and it is one of the Territory’s most popular parks.
- The collaborative partnership with 4WD NT partnership through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) continued to support access and co-operation.
- Collaborated with the Finnis and Reynolds River Catchment Group to manage Mimosa *Mimosa pigra* and aerial control of feral animals on the Reynolds River, on and off park.
- Secured a Green Army team under federal funding for six months to undertake Gamba Grass *Andropogan gayanus* management and support employment and training for local Indigenous youth.
- Conducted biodiversity surveys in partnership with NT Field Naturalists.
- New bridge crossings along Lower Cascades walk installed to improve visitor satisfaction and safety.
- Gamba Grass *Andropogan gayanus* research undertaken with Charles Darwin University and the Department of Land Resource Management.
- Partnered with Charles Darwin University to deliver training and park management experience to Certificate IV Conservation and Land Management students.
- Partnered with Conservation Volunteers Australia on Green Army project to eradicate and control Gamba Grass *Andropogan gayanus*.

**Adelaide River Parks**
- Friends of Fogg Dam community group and stakeholders held a Weed Harvester Opening at Fogg Dam. The harvester has allowed nine acres of surface vegetation to be removed opening up the vegetation and promoting biodiversity.
- Friends of Fogg Dam and Field and Game NT obtained $48 000 of funding to assist with the management of the introduced weed Olive Hymenachne *Hymenachne amplexicaulis* at Fogg and Harrisons Dam areas.
- Secured a Green Army team under federal funding for three months through Friends of Fogg Dam to assist with reserve management and support employment and training for local Indigenous youth.
- Over 600 waterfowl hunters were checked for compliance at Harrison Dam and Lambell’s Lagoon over the waterfowl season. One infringement was issued.
Mary River National Park
- Further developed the partnership with Sporting Shooters Association Conservation Pest Management for pest animal management.
- The collaborative partnership with 4WD NT continued to support access and co-operation.
- Extensive aerial and ground management of Mimosa *Mimosa pigra* and Olive Hymenachne *Hymenanchne amplexicaulis* on land and in waterways to maintain recreational fishing opportunities and biodiversity in the wetlands.
- Ongoing partnership with educational groups such as Sydney University to undertake fauna and flora surveys.
- Assisted Charles Darwin University with Gamba Grass *Andropogon gayanus* management research.
- Supported the Department of Land Resource Management with water resource and soil conservation management in the Mary River area.

Nitmiluk National Park
- Collaborated with Charles Darwin University Centre for Bushfire Research and Jawoyn Association Rangers to complete flora assessment across 46 fire plots as part of the ‘Three Parks Fire Monitoring Program’ to monitor the impacts of fire regimes on flora diversity.
- Assisted Department of Land Resource Management in completing fauna surveys across 48 sites to monitor impacts of fire and feral predators on small mammals.
- Constructed the new Waleka Walk as part of the Southern Walks network providing more direct access to scenic and camping areas within the Gorge including Jeddas lookout, Butterfly Gorge and Smitt Rock.
- Joint fire camp held in the south-east of Nitmiluk between the Commission and Jawoyn Association Rangers to carry out early Dry season burns to reduce the impact of wildfires and protect Lancewood *Acacia shirleyi*.

Elsey National Park
- Access to Bitter Springs pools was upgraded with the construction of a new exit point and repairs to existing exit points and the removal of old infrastructure.
- The 12 Mile Campground main toilet block was refurbished with new fittings and repainted.

Limmen National Park
- In conjunction with traditional owners and a consultant, the Commission developed a Cultural Heritage Map for Limmen National Park. The map will assist management of the Park and support the development of visitor information regarding the cultural heritage of the Park.
- The Commission was successful in obtaining a grant through the McArthur River Mine Community Benefit Trust to develop and implement rock art management programs with traditional owners. The project will also provide training and employment for traditional owners and support the development of Indigenous enterprise.
Barranyi National Park
• Implemented a motion sensor camera survey on Barranyi (North Island) National Park in partnership with Li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Rangers and Desert Wildlife Services. No feral cats were detected.
• Collected Casuarina Casuarina equisitifolia seed from Barranyi (North Island) National Park which were propagated by George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens, with 1800 seedlings to be used for a revegetation project on the Park.
• Successfully partnered with local service provider for Remote Jobs and Community Program (RJCP) workers to participate in on ground works associated with walking track maintenance including clearing vegetation, constructing stone steps, paving, erosion and drainage control and painting.

Caranbarini Conservation Reserve
• Partnered with the Remote Jobs and Communities Program crew to upgrade and maintain walking tracks.

Judbarra / Gregory National Park
• A new joint management logo design has been endorsed by the Judbarra / Gregory National Park Joint Management Committee.
• Assisted with Bush Blitz nature discovery expeditions on Judbarra / Gregory National Park which discovered seven new species of spiders, possibly a new frog species and range extensions for the Angalarri Grunter and a species of eel which were previously only known from the Daly River catchment.
• Rangers assisted with Bullita cave system speleological cave mapping surveys resulting in a further 20km mapping of the existing 270km.
• Successfully entered into host agreement with Commonwealth Government for Devils Claw Martynnia annua weed control operations along the Gibbie, Humbert and East Baines Rivers within Judbarra / Gregory National Park.
• Installed new interpretation signage along the Nawilbinbin walking track as well as commenced stair construction and maintenance works along the track.

Keep River National Park
• Construction of two new hybrid system toilets at Gurrandalng and Jarnem campgrounds.
• Upgraded the Jarnem walk with the construction and installation of portable bridge platforms for sections along Jarnem Walk.

Karlu Karlu / Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve
• The Reserve continued to be one of the most popular campsites in Central Australia / Barkly region with capacity reached on many days especially during mid year school holidays.
• WiFi was installed in the Reserve by Tourism NT for visitor information at the Day Use Area. It is very popular with visitors. Signage promoting the site was produced in consultation with traditional owners of the Reserve.
• A local Aboriginal ranger group, the Muru-Warinyi Ankkul Rangers from Tennant Creek, has been awarded the contract for visitor facility cleaning.
Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve

- Major pedestrian and bike path entrances into the Alice Springs Telegraph Station have been upgraded. The trail network was concreted for safety purposes and to encourage use of the Riverside Walk linking the township of Alice Springs to the Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historic Precinct.
- A new annual running event the ‘Town to Telegraph’ Dash, was initiated this year by the Alice Springs Running and Walking Club using the new path. The Telegraph Station tracks have been consistently used by schools for orienteering and cross country running events and the picnic area for small functions and concerts. Examples of the variety of events range from Alice Springs Saddle Horse Club and Hermannsburg School ANZAC Day Light Horse conducting rides along the Todd River from Alice Springs, cycling club road criterium race, Central Australia Aboriginal Media Association concerts, Freedom Summit meeting of Aboriginal leaders and the Alice Springs Masters Games cross country and mountain bike races. The Telegraph Station walks were also used by the National Heart Foundation for community walks as part the Healthy Hearts initiative.
- Completion of Stage 1 of Alice Springs Telegraph Station Mountain Bike Network. This project has created a network of high quality trails through the greater Alice Springs Telegraph Station Reserve and linking to surrounding land.
- Stage 2 of the Mountain Bike network linking the Alice Springs Telegraph Station with the Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park and the Mountain Bike trails on the Crown lands west of Alice Springs, has been partially completed.
- The Telegraph Station Heritage Precinct continued to be a popular function venue hosting the NT Tourism Awards and a number of other functions.
- National Trust’s Heritage Week was celebrated again with events at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station including a Heritage Open Day with markets attracting approximately 850 visitors. The Morsecodians Society from both Sydney and Adelaide again set up a morse code display allowing visitors to forward transmissions as a part of Heritage Week and Back to Morse Week.
- The successful cactus control program for the Weed of National Significance Coral Cactus continued at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station with the assistance of Batchelor College Conservation and Land Management students.

Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park

- Development and installation of the telemetry system of potable water tanks on the Larapinta Trail. Remote water tanks are now fitted with floats which send a UHF data stream back to the office showing water levels in each tank. This reduces visits required to check tanks, wear and tear on vehicles and access tracks and increased operational efficiency.
- Continued to support and work with the Friends of the Larapinta Trail on track management.
- Funding of various land management projects through the Red Centre Biodiversity Fund – cat baiting, aerial burning and feral animal removal across park.
- A new Ormiston Gorge kiosk shelter was constructed.
• Finalised a third exclusive use sub-lease with World Expeditions on the Larapinta Trail at Rockybar Gap to improve visitor amenities.
• Undertook various community engagement activities on park – Nightstalks and Ranger guided interpretive activities.
• Mountain Bike Trail (Stage 2) work completed in north east of Simpsons Gap which connects to the Alice Springs Telegraph Station Mountain Bike Trails.
• Undertook various community engagement activities on park – Frog watch, Nightstalks and Owen Springs tag along tours.

Finke Gorge National Park
• Arid Lands Environment Centre Biodiversity Matters project undertook routine maintenance and monitoring of the Red Cabbage Palms *Liverstonia mariae* as a community engagement project.

Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve
• Installation of new interpretive signs along walking tracks produced in consultation with working group comprising Parks and Wildlife Commission staff and traditional owners.
• The Buffel Grass *Chenchrus ciliaris* control program has continued with the assistance of traditional owners employed under the casual work program. This program has been particularly effective in reducing the incidence of Buffel Grass *Chenchrus ciliaris* in key environmental areas of the Reserve.

Watarrka National Park
• Undertook further upgrades to the Kings Canyon Rim Walk in order to improve visitor safety and enjoyment, whilst protecting the areas natural and cultural environment.
• Continued to manage the captive-bred Mala / Rufus Hare-Wallaby *Lagorchestes hirsutus* population in conjunction with the Department of Land Resource Management and the National Mala Recovery Team with a focus on reducing feral herbivore, rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*, competition inside the enclosure.
• Commenced a successful Aboriginal employment project which has seen up to six members of the local communities working with Commission rangers on park management activities.

George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens
• The Botanic Gardens has seen a number of changes and added new events and visitor engagement opportunities during the past year. Visitors to the Gardens can now glide through on an electric powered Segway Tour, enjoy High Tea at Eva’s Café, view stunning landscape photography at the Eco Gallery, as well as enjoying monthly markets.
• The two major entrances to the Gardens have been landscaped and the development of a new themed garden including boabs species and succulent plants is progressing. Additionally the construction of a landing and steps through the new Heritage Wall provides an easy and safe link between Frangipani Hill and the Holtze Lawn.
• Remediation of areas of the Gardens affected by asbestos was undertaken. The lining of upper catchment drainage lines with rock and geotextile underlay and new grassed areas were established with 600m³ of contaminated waste disposed of as part of stage one. Stage two works will remediate areas along Gilruth Avenue.

• The Gardens hosted a ‘Healthy Holiday Fun’ program of activities during the April 2015 school holiday break. The program was run in partnership with Life. Be in it. The three day program was very successful with approximately 3000 children and adults attending.

• Gardens staff were involved in a number of activities including introducing children to the miracle of germination with the ‘Plant a seed activity’, organising boat races in the Playground creek using the wooden seed pods of the Queensland Black Bean tree Castanospermum australe and guiding would-be field naturalists (complete with binoculars and magnifying glasses) through the hidden wonders of the Sensory Garden.

• The George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens has actively sought new ways to engage with visitors and locals consistent with the strategic goal ‘Parks for People’: to expand recreational activities, grow sustainable nature and culture based tourism and enhance the visitor experience.

Wildlife Operations
• The Chief Minister’s Awards for Excellence was announced on 14 November 2014. The Wildlife Carer Guidelines, developed by the Wildlife Operations Division, was a finalist in the ‘Enhancing our Culture and Lifestyle’ category.

Territory Wildlife Park
• The Park has seen visitor numbers increase by 0.64%, while visitor satisfaction responses were 94% overall.

• Participated in the preparation of the Kakadu National Park threatened species strategy.

• Preliminary findings on impacts and benefits of keeping threatened species Largetooth Sawfish Pristis pristis and a paper on Nursery Fish was presented at the American Society of Ichthyology and Herpetology conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee in August 2014.

• Initiated a collaborative project with the University of Melbourne, the University of Technology Sydney and the Mareeba Wetlands to investigate Cane Toad Rhinella marina aversion in Northern Quolls Dasyurus hallucatus as a genetic trait.

• Acquired a juvenile Nabarlek / Pygmy Rock Wallaby Petrogale concinna, and Spectacled Hare-wallaby Lagorchestes conspicillatus through public donations. The Nabarlek is the only individual in captivity in the world.

• Facilitated the introduction of a dedicated photo booth where visitors can buy personalised photos of themselves with a range of wildlife.

• Continued to develop an art trail throughout the Park and now have beautifully mosaiced shade structure poles at the Oolloo Sandbar and concrete tunnels at the Nocturnal House train station where children can play and pick out the features in the art work. There are now fibreglass lanterns depicting Top End animals located at the train stations around the Park.
• Improved school and community group camping facilities with the
collection of a purpose built amenities block in the woollybutts function
area as part of the minor new works program.
• Improved the visitor amenities with upgrades to the picnic area including
re-lawnning, additional lighting, increased shaded seating areas and increased
the storage capacity of the Visitor Services area.
• Strong community engagement with the local and broader Darwin community
continued with locals, Correctional Services work crews and a contingent of
US Marines participating in landscaping and repairs and maintenance projects
weekly and monthly across the Park.
• Provided work placement for IronBark employment services assisting clients
that are working for unemployment benefits and ‘Return to Work’ placements
for various groups with four positions hosted in 2014-15.
• Conservation Volunteers Australia project team assisted with refurbishments
in the Nocturnal House.

Alice Springs Desert Park
• Visitor numbers to the Alice Springs Desert Park increased 17.65% relative to
2013-14 with 60-70% of total visitors (Tourism NT) arriving in Alice Springs
visiting the Park.
• Visitor satisfaction was 91% for the Park.
• Continued the successful propagation of the threatened species *Typhonium*
sp. sandover, *Acacia undoolyana* and *Acacia latzii* at the Park.
• Partnered with researchers Flinders University to study the threatened Slater’s
Skink *Liopholis slateri* with regard to preferred burrow aspects and conditions
thus potentially enhancing conservation of this species.
• Provided professional support to the Olive Pink Botanic Garden through
participation on the Board of Trustees and botanical and horticultural advice
and access to propagation facilities and plant material.
• Conducted Easter Bilby Fun Day to combine a fun day out for families with a
focus on the threats to wildlife, particularly bilbies, and positive actions that
people can engage in to assist endangered species.
• World Environment Day at the Alice Springs Desert Park involved a strong
emphasis in all presentations on threatened species and the positive actions
people can engage in to assist these species. Opportunities for the public
to enhance the Park’s habitats were made via a tree planting activity and
information session on native plants.
• Currently under construction, the Carpet Python Exhibit presents a classic
MacDonnell Ranges gorge with a near-vertical rock wall at the rear of the
exhibit, dry sandy riverbed as the substrate, and a small waterhole against the
base of the rock wall. The purpose is to display a large adult pair of Centralian
Carpet Pythons *Morelia spilota bredli* in a nocturnal setting.
• Propagated 1000 Bush Tomato *Solanum centrale* for Ninti One Cooperative
Research Centre.
• Conducted germination trials of Millennium Seed Bank. This will be ongoing.
• Revamped Ghost Bat *Macroderma gigas* display allowing better viewing by
the public and also allowing an increase in the size of the colony.
Park Visitor Numbers

Territory parks and reserves present the unique natural, cultural and historical character and values of the Northern Territory. Parks and reserves provide space for people to encounter and connect with nature in a meaningful way; they provide opportunities for innovative and inspiring natural and cultural experiences; they offer learning experiences that cannot be offered in a classroom; and they protect many significant natural, cultural, historical and recreational assets, so that they can continue to be enjoyed by future generations.

The Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory is committed to providing better access to our parks and reserves for tourists and local Territorians. By acknowledging the varying interests and expectations of our visitors and capturing the stories of the Territory, the Parks and Wildlife Commission can expand on existing ventures or create new initiatives to ensure that all visitors can truly ‘experience’ the Northern Territory in a profound and meaningful way.

There are 87 parks and reserves in the Northern Territory Parks estate. These parks and reserves exist for their spectacular natural, cultural, geological, historical or tourism / recreational values and continue to be a significant contributor to the local economy, particularly in regional and remote areas. These parks are celebrated by local communities and are increasingly used by the Northern Territory community for recreational activities and events and by tourists seeking to truly ‘experience’ the Northern Territory. The Parks and Wildlife Commission enjoyed positive visitor satisfaction ratings at parks and reserves during the 2014-15 financial year. These ratings are based on independent visitor experiences (monitored through TripAdvisor) as well as visitor satisfaction surveys that are conducted by the Commission.

The TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence awards those organisations that consistently achieve outstanding independent traveller reviews on TripAdvisor. A TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence is based on individual review ratings, the overall rating and the quantity and frequency of reviews. To be eligible, organisations must maintain a rating of at least four out of five, have a minimum number of reviews, and have been listed on TripAdvisor for at least 12 months.

In 2014-15, the Parks and Wildlife Commission achieved 14 TripAdvisor Certificates of Excellence. Many of the Commission’s Top 20 visitor parks are listed on the TripAdvisor website, and of these, all have been ranked four out of five or higher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Listing</th>
<th>TripAdvisor Award</th>
<th>TripAdvisor Park rating 2014-15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Casuarina Coastal Reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve</td>
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<td>Howard Springs Nature Park</td>
<td>Certificate of Excellence 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Park Listing</td>
<td>TripAdvisor Award</td>
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<td>Judbarra / Gregory National Park</td>
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<td>Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ormiston Gorge</td>
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</table>
It is estimated that in 2014-15 more than 3.3 million people visited the Territory’s top 24 Parks and Reserves (including the Territory Wildlife Parks and the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens). The most popular parks and reserves are Casuarina Coastal Reserve, Alice Springs Telegraph Station, Litchfield National Park, Nitmiluk National Park, Tjoritja / West MacDonnell National Park, Watarrka National Park and George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens. In 2014-15, 80% of international and 36% of domestic visitors attended at least one national park during their stay in the Northern Territory\(^1\), which is significantly higher than the national average of 39% and 8% respectively.

A large proportion of park users in the Northern Territory are local residents. The diverse range and distances of our parks means that they are accessible for half day, full day and extended camping trips, providing significant opportunities for the Parks and Wildlife Commission to create a diverse range of unique and exceptional visitor experiences, each catering to different interests, needs and expectations.

\(^1\) - (Source: Tourism NT)
**Visitor Numbers for the Commission’s Top Visitor Parks**

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<tr>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Total Visitor numbers</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alice Springs Desert Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Territory Wildlife Park</td>
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<td>George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens</td>
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<td>Berry Springs Nature Park</td>
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<td>Casuarina Coastal Reserve (WOP*)</td>
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<td>Chambers Pillar Historical Reserve</td>
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<td>Karlu Karlu/Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve</td>
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<td>Elsey National Park (WOP*)</td>
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<td>Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve</td>
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<td>Trephina Gorge</td>
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<td>Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historical Reserve</td>
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<td>Finke Gorge National Park</td>
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<td>Tjoritja / West MacDonnell NP (WOP*)</td>
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<td>Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve</td>
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<td>Mary River National Park - Shady Camp</td>
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<td>Judbarra / Gregory National Park (WOP*)</td>
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<td>Keep River National Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nitmiluk National Park (WOP*)</td>
<td>250 185</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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* (WOP) - whole of Park
Engaging the Community

The Community Engagement, and Interpretation and Communications Units sit within the Tourism and Visitor Engagement Division. Staff work in partnership with other areas in the Commission to provide the interface between the community and the Commission. These units provide information, advice and support within the Commission, as well as to schools, universities, educational institutions, service providers, other agencies and the wider community.

Territory Parks Alive Program

The Territory Parks Alive program provides a range of different interpretive and awareness-raising experiences for visitors in parks and reserves throughout the Northern Territory. This program is a good opportunity to showcase our parks while also increasing community knowledge, appreciation, support and advocacy for our parks and reserves.

Junior Ranger Program

The 2014-15 Junior Ranger program was delivered across all regions catering for around 30 participants in each region.

In the Alice Springs region 27 Junior Rangers graduated from the program. Activities were aimed at providing Junior Rangers and Junior Ranger families with the tools and knowledge to gain a broader understanding of their local environment whilst visiting local national parks and reserves. Each activity over the program was structured to provide hands on experience for participants to learn new skills and knowledge and understand the unique qualities of the arid environment around them. Specific activities delivered included: A Walk in the Park, Bat Night, Night Stalk, Frogs on Fridays and School holiday programs.

In the Katherine region 34 Junior Rangers participated in and graduated from the program. Activities presented were focused around providing a fun and hands on introduction to environmental management to connect children to their local environment and enable them to gain a broader understanding. In 2014 specific activities included vegetation surveys, visits to Nitmiluk National Park to learn about joint management, learning about water resources and working with the Katherine Landcare Group to care for the Katherine River at a popular fishing spot.